Nature and Culture

Critical Review

An Interdisciplinary Journal *of* Politics *and* Society

In Defense of Bourgeois Culture	**Frederick Turner**
Modern Art and Capitalism	**Donald Kuspit**
Aesthetics and Evolution	**Nathan Kogan**
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Speech and Human Group Size	**Alexandra Maryanski**
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Jeffrey Friedman

NATURE AND CULTURE

Human nature was integral to political theory until Kant "cleansed" moral philosophy "of everything that can only be empirical and appropriate to anthropology" ([1785] 1956, 57). In Kantian and other versions of liberalism, considerations of human nature have either disappeared or have degenerated into the meaningless debates seen in recent years over whether "the subject" is communally constituted or antecedently individuated. In the meantime, however, data have become available that enable us to go far beyond the casual empiricism that was the only recourse of such students of human nature as Aristotle. Archaeology, neurology, social psychology, social anthropology, and Darwinian psychology have produced ample information about the nature of "man" that often stands in sharp contrast to the empirical conclusions reached by classical philosophers—conclusions that have, in our day, hardened into dogmas about the allegedly social, linguistic, or rational "essence" of humanity. If we are interested in evaluating the effects of modern, open societies on human well-being, it would seem imperative to bring these new data to bear.

Previous issues of *Critical Review* have explored some of the more directly political ramifications of modern anthropology. Daniel Dombrowski discussed some of the implications of ethology for political thought in volume 8, number 3; and in our special issue on nationalism (vol. 10, no. 2), Martin Tyrrell probed the apparently innate human tendency to divide into in- and out-groups. In vol-

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ume 9, number 4, Robert Edgerton and Alexandra Maryanski discussed empirical evidence for viewing human beings as rather weakly social animals, whose fragile personal loyalties extend to a quite limited circle of family and friends.

In the present issue Maryanski considers whether language evolved to replace primate grooming, and whether this evolution would have imposed a sharp limit on the number of friendships we can tolerate—and thus whether it might be a source of severe psychological problems for beings like us, who evolved to be hunter-gatherers but who have come to live in very different forms of society. Jonathan Turner also, if incidentally, takes up the question of the origins of language, and in the process undermines the doctrine that language is a prerequisite of morality. Turner's larger project, however, is an eye-opening reconstruction of the source of the emotions that back up human moral codes. Keith Otterbein then considers whether precivilized human beings were peaceful or warlike, and delivers bad news for those who want to ground ethics on human nature but who also prefer peace to slaughter.

There are, however, other normative uses to which modern anthropology can be put. Rather than equating the naturally or "essentially" human with the good, we can attempt to evaluate, and possibly reform, our institutions and culture with an eye to the constraints and the needs generated by human nature, but without treating these natural features as necessarily normative. For instance, if happiness is independently posited as good, then by taking account of human predispositions, we may come closer to achieving this goal. But such an approach runs up against the cultural relativism dissected in this issue by Dennis Wrong. It may also conflict with recent attempts to use economic reasoning to solve every social puzzle. Russell Hardin's *One for All*, discussed below by Alex de Waal, is not an example of dogmatic rational-choice imperialism, but on de Waal's account it is nonetheless inadequate to explain the processes by which potentially hostile groups come to "exist." Yet rational choice theory is itself an attempt to take a hard-headed look at empirical human nature. In de Waal's view its error lies not in its naturalistic aspirations, but in its adherence to an a priori conception of what human nature is (namely, selfish)—one that, ironically, leaves too little room for that to which the relativist enemies of "human nature" give pride of place: malleable human mental constructs. But de Waal bases his alternative to a priori rational

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choice theory not on the equally a priori conviction that there is only culture and no nature. Rather, he cites social-psychological findings about the natural human propensity to form groups as a possible basis for our susceptibility to politicians and intellectuals who eagerly construct cultural "identities."

Although they may seem distant from the traditional concerns of political theory, the opening essays by Frederick Turner, Donald Kuspit, and Nathan Kogan well illustrate the promise anthropology holds for rethinking modern politics. Kuspit views art as being charged with the mission of healing the ills of modernity—particularly capitalism. From this perspective he criticizes Frederick Turner's defense of bourgeois culture; Turner, meanwhile, finds Kuspit's critique of capitalist culture deficient because of its basis in an inadequate grasp of human (and nonhuman) nature. Whether capitalist culture is, indeed, psychologically unhealthy, and whether, if it is, it can be healed through art or through politics (see Kuspit's contribution to vol. 9, no. 4), are questions of obvious importance for political theory. Kogan's contribution is to give us some of the materials with which such questions can be answered, by discussing the evolutionary bases of our aesthetic capacities. This aspect of human nature is of equal political significance to the topics of the articles on more obviously political topics that follow—as long as our conception of the political is concerned with the satisfaction of empirical human needs rather than the vindication of a priori human rights. Human rights may, of course, play a vital role in meeting human needs. The determination of such rights, however, would seem to require a foundation in the empirical study of human needs, as opposed to the a priori basis they so often receive in liberal theory.

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Frederick Turner

MODERNISM: CURE OR DISEASE?

ABSTRACT: *Donald Kuspit's* The Cult of the Avant-Garde Artist *traces the therapeutic mission of modern art through its rise and decline into postmodern decadence. The problems Kuspit rightly finds in such artists as Warhol and Koons, however, are endemic to modernism itself: its diagnosis of bourgeois society as sick and in need of cure is fundamentally unsound. The modernist cure is, moreover, worse than the purported disease. What modernists call kitsch is, in many cases, a healthy, tragic view of life. And while modernist metaphysics teaches the need for unmediated sensory experience and the inauthenticity of reproduction and representation, contemporary science shows these ideas to be without foundation.*

Donald Kuspit has in his book, *The Cult of the Avant-Garde Artist* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), taken a new step in a distinguished career of art criticism by epitomizing the development of modern and postmodern art in one grand—and sad—trajectory. This is no textbook that merely lists a succession of styles and schools; it is an impassioned polemic, with a salient central theme—the therapeutic role of modern art and its postmodern betrayal—that is as significant for what it leaves out as for what it includes. The clear signposting, mapping, and labeling of the artistic terrain, and the vigorous statement of the issues, make this book

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both a useful service to the reader, and also, like any piece of advocacy, a tract to be read with a measure of skepticism.

Kuspit argues that the great project of modern art was to diagnose, and cure, the sickness unto death of modern humankind. He uses the philosophers Alfred North Whitehead and Friedrich Nietzsche, and the psychologists Erich Fromm and D. W. Winnicott, to outline what he deems the mission of art. Kierkegaard might have served Kuspit's purposes just as well, or better; Kuspit's austere and unsparing insistence on sincerity and authenticity is much in the spirit of the great Danish existentialist. The artistic mission of modernism, as Kuspit describes it, is to identify and strip away the false self of routine experience and interpretive framing provided by conformist mass commercial society, and to make us experience nakedly and anew the immediacy of reality through our peeled and rejuvenated senses. This therapeutic work is also a spiritual mission, in that a community of such transformed human beings would, in theory, be able to construct a better kind of society. The enemies of this process are cooptation, commercial exploitation and reproduction, and kitsch.

Kuspit identifies six major strategies by which artists in our century set about confronting this challenge, and selects paradigmatic artists to represent each one. The first strategy is the distortion of visual reality, the presentation of a provocative object designed to undermine and unhinge the viewer's visual preconceptions. Kuspit's major examples are Picasso, Duchamp, and Braque. The second strategy is to substitute for the seducing and corrupting world of sensory objects a pure and perfect world of rational geometry, releasing us from our bonds to the external and the expected and initiating us into a higher reality of spiritual abstraction. Kuspit cites Mondrian and Malevich as exemplars: Mondrian in a playful and liberating mode, Malevich in a prophetic and dictatorial one. The third strategy is the expressionist one: the liberation of the ego from the tragedy of life by the creation of another world of truer emotional feeling. Oddly, the only artist Kuspit cites in any depth as a fully qualifying example is Kandinsky. He puts surrealism, including Dali and Breton, into this category, but the schema feels a little strained here. The fourth strategy, incarnate in Andy Warhol, is in Kuspit's view a betrayal of the whole modernist mission. It is to use the prestige of the avant-garde artist to soothe and flatter the audience, by showing that the artist is no different from the rest of us in desiring

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his fifteen minutes of fame; a psychically empty, narcissistic artist uses his fame to support the fragile and hollow egos of his narcissistic audience. By buying or being seen appreciating his works, they shine in his reflected glory. The fifth strategy is what Kuspit calls the artist's last stand, exemplified in Joseph Beuys: it is to cleanse the irredeemably compromised moral history of society by a reversion to barbarism, magic, and irrational shamanism. The sixth and final strategy, also ushered in by Warhol, is where the apocalyptic ire of this book finds its biggest target: the reproduction of the gestures of the great avant-garde genius, but in a reduced and parodic mode. Kuspit has no lack of victims in this category: Morris, Koons, Levine, Bidlo, Kiefer, Schnabel, Mapplethorpe, and others.

There is a certain ethical nobility and dark splendor in Kuspit's vision, but this is a bitter and disappointed book. Part of its *schadenfreude* comes from its method, which, I believe, echoes a fundamental structural problem in the ideology of modernism itself. For each new artist and theory introduced (with the exception of the postmodernist strategies, numbers four and six in the taxonomy above), Kuspit gives a glowing and persuasive justification, usually from the point of view of the very movement or artist he is describing. It is as if he were writing exhibition catalog notes. But when he moves on to the next strategy and the next group of artists, his warm and enthusiastic treatment of the previous movement disappears; suddenly we see all the flaws of a Picasso or a Mondrian, where before we had seen only their daring, their insight, and their healing power. This treatment exactly echoes the Oedipal process of modernism itself, which must always renew itself upon the despised and discarded relics of its predecessors. The son gains his powers by destroying and consuming the charisma of the father. It is a tribute to Kuspit's insight that he recognizes, in the parodic and trivial cloning of the neo-avant garde, the final outcome of this process, but I believe that he is not quite so aware of how the final decadence is rooted in modernism itself. The avant garde, he says, is dead; it has become an institutionalized cliché (107). But perhaps it always was: for it was not modernism at all, but its predecessor, Romanticism, that invented the view that what makes an artist great is the reduction of all his artistic ancestors to kitsch. One could thus have given Warhol and the postmodernists an initial reception just as glowing as the others—postmodern art had no lack of plausible, socially corrective propaganda, as well as great prophets in Walter Benjamin

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and Jacques Derrida—making the essentially self-destructive nature of modernism obvious. He who slays his father will suffer the same fate at the hands of his son. What Picasso did to the likes of Bougereau, Warhol did to Picasso, and Koons now does to Warhol. (The gendered pronouns of this paragraph are intentional: it is only recently that female artists have joined in the Romantic and modern game of artistic parricide.)

The Rebirth of Tragedy

The Cult of the Avant-Garde Artist is in a real sense a tragic book by a tragic intellectual hero. Like all such heroes, Kuspit denies, with admirable stubbornness, the essentially tragic nature of life. Unlike Edgar in King Lear, who bends with the storm and transforms himself into Poor Tom the madman (and so is able to don the armor of the avenging angel of justice), Kuspit defies, Lear-like, the terrible consequences of his chosen worldview. The age of the great art that he loves is past, and he wanders the ruins, plagued with inner sight—perhaps the blinded Oedipus is a better metaphor. What he loves about the great modernists is their rejection of tragedy. This rejection is indeed both modernism's defining characteristic and its paradoxically tragic flaw. Bertolt Brecht saw it clearly: the chief enemy of his ideal communist society, of his socialist New Man, was the empathy and identification, the desire for a happy ending and its pleasingly exhausting refusal, the acceptance of suffering and imperfection, that constitute the drama of tragedy. The *Verfremdungseffekt* Brecht devised in his drama is surely the equivalent of those strategies of abstraction and distortion by which, as Kuspit shows, modernist painters sought to alienate the sympathies of their viewers from the lachrymose sentimentality of bourgeois perception. But the world has rejected Brecht's vision, and it is only a matter of time before it rejects the puritanism of avant-garde art; it has chosen instead the tragic view of life. We no longer live in a modernist world.

But why should the world have chosen the tragic vision—if only with its feet? The answer is another paradox: the tragic vision is the only realistic form of true optimism, and the only sound basis for hope and progress. The anguish of tragedy can come only from gigantic loss and waste. Such loss presupposes that there is something supremely valuable and dear to be lost; a worthless and trivial world

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cannot contain anything whose loss would be worth mourning. The world must then be meaningful, or at least productive of meaning. But if the world can once supply, create, or grow objects or persons with such supreme value that their loss is tragic, then the world can do it again; tragedy is at base a triumphant assertion of our universe's power to generate springtimes and children, hostages whose loss would be the cause of infinite suffering. Tragedy affirms the ability of at least some human beings to *suffer adequately*, to give the accurate emotional response to such loss. This ability is godlike; may we be protected from having to exercise it!

But if one's readiness to act and to suffer is robust enough, there is an exhilaration in this view of life. Remarkably, this is the basic approach of the world's middle class, so despised by the artists: to choose the kitschy optimism of affirming ordinary life and work; to risk economic disaster by private enterprise and investment; to risk emotional damage by the commitment to marriage; to risk the destruction of one's whole world by having children, the ultimate hostages to time and reality. Collectively the accepted risk is that the expanding capitalist economy, always breaking new ground, always unprecedented, may collapse again as it did in the Great Depression; that our technology will tip some crucial and catastrophic balance in the ecosystem; that we will blow ourselves up in a nuclear conflict; that we will simply run out of raw materials and ideas; that the dynamics of an expanding free society will prove radically unstable and collapse into social chaos and internecine strife; that our new technological lifestyle will be incompatible with our primate psychology, and we will all go mad. Yet the world of non-artists and non-intellectuals has chosen this future, chosen the optimism of having such a future. The reason so many societies with planned economies finally collapsed was that people no longer believed in the project of eliminating tragedy, and the reason they no longer believed in eliminating tragedy was that a world without tragedy turned out to be a world without value.

This is not to say that the *Zeitgeist* has given up on progress. The only people who have given up on progress, as Kuspit shows, are the avant gardes. The *Zeitgeist* wants everybody to be rich, but is willing to bet that if we are all comfortably off, we will not simply vegetate, but will be driven by boredom both to new achievements and new sufferings and misfortunes. The *Zeitgeist* knows now that we will never cease to be quite capable of making tragedies for

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ourselves, out of the very conditions of mortal existence—death, time, individuality, unequal gifts, our need to kill other living organisms to stay alive, the eternal dispute between the lower, more archaic aspects of our embodied mind, and its higher, more evolutionarily recent ones. And the *Zeitgeist* is not snobbish; it does not disdain to recycle old cultural patterns, Classical, Medieval, Renaissance, Enlightenment, Romantic. It has no fear of kitsch. Kuspit's discerning analysis reveals, almost unconsciously, how fearful contemporary avant-garde artists have become about the remotest hint of indulging, let alone enjoying, kitsch.

In the real world kitsch has triumphed, and it returns transvalued in the brawlingly healthy new art of the popular imagination, the art of the always-emerging technological economy. What Marx calls bourgeois false consciousness has, like the humble mammals of the Cretaceous, survived the extinction of the grand dinosaurs of revolutionary honor and existential authenticity. In his despair Kuspit (109), turning against the enthusiasm of a lifetime's advocacy of modernity, seems grudgingly to admit the legitimacy of *classical* art. But his distrust of capitalist society is so deep that he cannot see the profoundly healthful new springs of inspiration that might be beginning to flow within it, inspiration that has discounted the fear of kitsch and has thus discovered a new innocence— a new classicism.

Modern Art and Post-Modernist Metaphysics

Perhaps the fundamental principle of modern art as Kuspit discerns it, the healing of a sick capitalist culture by a spiritual and intellectual artistic elite, is profoundly misguided and misconceived. Regrettably, Kuspit never pauses to ask: What if the modernist diagnosis was wrong all along? What if bourgeois culture was not sick, but just off its diet and in need of fresh air and exercise? Suppose it really needed to do more of what a healthy organism does—explore, feed itself, socialize, reproduce, and provide for the future—rather than take to its bed and accept the ministrations of its imperious and all-knowing artists? The therapeutic impulse, noble though it is, is not self-validating. We have had thousands of years during which the earnest efforts of physicians of the body and mind have arguably done more harm than good.

According to the theory of the senses with which, as Kuspit tells

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it, modernism began, fresh raw experience—to which artists have an unmediated and childlike access—is routinized, compartmentalized, and dulled into insensibility by society. But this theory cannot stand up against the evidence of today's neuroscience; thus Kuspit's division of the psyche into a true inner self and a false social self will not hold up, either. There is no unmediated human experience, and the more cerebrally interpreted an experience is, the *greater* its subjective concreteness. Dendritic fibers from higher cortical areas of the brain project all the way down to the most peripheral and apparently naked sensory neurons. Perception is not a one-way street from the sense organ to the brain, but a two-way feedback system with chaotically emergent structures of self-organization. Thus those artists who try to give us an unmediated and uninterpreted visual experience, as the Cubists sought to do, according to Kuspit, are doomed to failure because the raw sense data are not raw, but "always already" dependent upon expectation.

Postmodern believers in the social construction of reality, who dismiss physical reality as a political strategy and regard the world as passive before our interpretation of it, can get even less comfort from the new research. The brain is constructed by the world, especially by its own genetic and evolutionary past, and returns the favor only to the extent that it works as constructed. Artists, such as Duchamp, who disdain the retina for the mind's reality, are as misguided as the devotees of unmediated sensory experience, for the mind is as much the retina as any other part of the brain. We use the visual world's rational organization, via the retina, as part of our own mental hardware, and are genetically predisposed to do so.

Abstraction, modernist theoreticians declared, was essentially superior to representation, for while a realist painter merely imitated that which was before him, the abstractionist created another real object, with its own presence and being in the world, which did not appeal to the bourgeois appetite for inauthentic, sentimental reminiscence. Postmodernist artists took this idea a step further, arguing that representation was part of the whole late-capitalist system of economic and cultural hegemony that had made genuine experience impossible. Capitalism, they argued, was based on the exact reproduction of identical objects, advertised to alienated consumers by mass-produced images that commodified the techniques of traditional representational art. "Pop artists" such as Warhol and Lichtenstein attempted to break the vicious circle of commodification by

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preemptively adopting the coarsest and corniest of representational techniques—the advertisement, the cartoon, the package, the publicity photo. Then they altered the resulting images by changing the scale or medium, appealing to bourgeois buyers through the depiction of familiar capitalist icons, but preserving their own artistic integrity by the use of abstraction to satirically undermine representational techniques and the socio-economic system such techniques supported.

The artists and theorists of this movement overlooked their reliance upon a premise that, though it seemed obvious to them, is fundamentally flawed. The premise is that abstraction creates objects that are more concrete, more real, more akin to the actual objects in the universe than to objects created by visual representation. An abstract work of art, the argument goes, is more like a rock or a tree or a living animal than is a picture of a rock, tree, or animal. Rocks, trees, and animals are innocent and don't represent; they simply exist. They possess the true Heideggerian qualities of *Dasein*, of Being There, unlike the compromised and self-conscious products of commercial technology. Primitive peoples, so the reasoning went, share this innocence, this direct contact with Being that the abstract artist labors to recover. Stories flew around (largely apocryphal, it turns out) of preliterate human beings being unable to recognize images in film; art photographers, following their lead, on being told that the picture in their hand was the Grand Canyon, would murmur impressively, "I thought it was bigger." It would be easy to pick on the lesser absurdities of this view. They include the implicit racism of assuming the unreflectiveness of "primitive" peoples, and the irony that the very word "nature" *means* reproduction. Nature, with its superabundant cloning of seeds and cells, is better at mass production than any factory producing "inauthentic" identical objects.

But there is a much deeper and more interesting mistake: the assumption that real objects, unlike human minds, don't represent, don't imitate, don't make pictures or maps of each other. In this essentially Cartesian view, nature is unreflective; only human beings reflect. Nature is innocent, humanity compromised. Nature is passive, people meddle. Nature is abstract, human beings represent. Four legs good, two legs bad. The truth is that nature is itself reflective, compromised, self-meddling, representational. With all of our representational games and strategies of signification, we are part of nature, perhaps its quintessential part, containing nature's own

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deepest tendencies in their most concentrated form. Thus the most real and authentic art is the most realist, representational art, and it is only when artists take up the challenge and responsibility of representation that they are fulfilling the highest aesthetic goals.

The modernist fallacy, paradoxically, is based upon reasoning that came originally from the philosophy of science. For centuries material determinists have insisted on the deadness of the fundamental matter of the universe, its absence of internal spontaneous process, self-awareness, and self-motivation. In this way, they conceded to God a necessary role in the giving of life and animation. Not daring to see God as immanent in the universe, and preferring to have Him outside it where He could, so to speak, be kept an eye on, they tried to make physicality as incomplete as possible in respect of all the properties attributed to soul—consciousness, reflectiveness, initiative, originality—so that He would still have something important to do.

Yet particles, atoms, and molecules are not totally transparent; they interrupt the forces that encounter them in such a way as to make them perceptible to humans and other animals. Light must be broken, scattered, transformed, absorbed, refracted, for us to see things at all: and it is only what is seeable—perceptible, in more general terms—that can be of any concern to science. If matter had no internal process, light would come to us utterly unaltered by the matter it had encountered, and thus the matter would be invisible. (Further, it is only where matter resists the complete logical explication of its internal process, where it interrupts the linear flow of rational consequence and we are forced to establish a constant, a given, that we have any fixed point that might justify a claim for its actual existence. It is the irreducibilty of the fundamental constants—the speed of light, the gravitational constant, the electron volt constant, Planck's constant, pi—their darkness and opacity to any further reductive explanation, their idiosyncratic characterization of the fundamental relations of physical reality—that gives them their foundational role in our understanding of reality.) As we now know, simply taking up space is a complex performance for matter, and its other qualities—mass, charge, parity, and so on—are the maintained achievements of its internal process. The processes by which matter communicates externally—chemical bonds, electromagnetic radiation, gravitation, etc.—are more remarkable still. Crystals, plants, animals, we ourselves are the emergent forms that

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such communication makes possible. The universe postulated by the material determinists, lacking that mysterious inner negotiation and external sensitivity that makes matter observable, would be completely invisible—and of course untouchable, unsmellable, inaudible, and tasteless as well. Since science relies essentially on observation, science would be impossible in such a universe. It is only to the extent that the universe and the things in it have some kind of inner metabolism and outer sociability—only, that is, to the extent to which they are alive—that they can be said to be at all. Being is not given, but the achievement of the universe's continuous originating inventiveness, its life and growth.

A large part of the aliveness, the internal reflexivity and external communicativeness of ordinary matter, is necessarily devoted to making and displaying more or less crude internal representations of the rest of the universe. Butterfly chrysalises often combine two or three levels of representation aimed at various possible predators: the appearance of a dead leaf to fend off the stupidest ones, an iridescent spot of color denoting poison to repel the cleverer ones who have spotted the disguise—and sometimes the imitation of a chrysalis of a truly poisonous butterfly, saving the metabolic expense of manufacturing real poison. Similarly, vines pestered by butterflies will grow leaves that look like butterflies, on the correct theory that butterflies will not lay eggs on what they think are fellow butterflies. But these are simple forms of representation and imitation compared to what one finds among higher animals. The greyleg goose expresses love for its mate by pointedly miming an attack on a non-existent goose, in a "triumph ceremony" that is a fine analogy of human theater. The male blue satin bowerbird's bower is not a real nest but a magnificent advertisement to the female of how good his nest-building genes are. The need to represent and depict continues all the way down to the most primitive entities in the universe. An atom must find a way to translate the impact of incoming energy into a form it can absorb without flying apart (indeed, all existing atoms are atoms that didn't fly apart). Atoms do this by adjusting the disposition of the electrons in the harmonic series of shells that make up their outer skin; and they react to the impact of energy by giving off a photon of their own, whose unique signature can be picked up by a spectrograph. Those spectral emanations are in fact representations of their environment in terms unique to the element that produces them.

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The designer and architect Jack Rees argues that it is no coincidence that the great physicists, such as Newton and Einstein, tended to make their discoveries in mechanics simultaneously with their discoveries in optics. Perhaps, he suggests, optics and mechanics are, at base, the same thing. That is, objects in the universe exist (have mechanical properties) only in and through the fact that they express themselves and experience the expressive activity of other objects (they see and are seen). All exchanges of information are conducted by photons of light or by particles that can be translated into photons. And mechanical processes are fundamentally exchanges of information. Certainly the basic principle of physical science is the assumption that an object has reality only to the extent that it is observable, even if indirectly. The only way that anything can be observed is by its effect on other things; thus for scientific reality we need not only a world of observable objects but also a world of observing objects, that is, objects that can register the presence of other objects.

Thus representation is a fundamental feature of reality, not just a perverse effect of civilization. The universe was only a "buzzing, booming confusion," as William James put it, at the moment of the Big Bang. Since then it has been painting and sculpting itself with greater and greater precision, evolving complex chemistry, plants, and animals that achieve a denser reality and concreteness the more sensory modalities they bring into play.

Art after Modernism and Postmodernism

Modernism followed a long period of peace and progress, but was quickly succeeded by the world wars, the Depression, the Holocaust, the Gulag, and the nuclear arms race. One might well be suspicious of a "cure" that precedes the sickness. It is at least conceivable that modernism was an attempt to cure a non-disease: the human situation, with its inevitable tragic dimension. If so, the proper role of art is humbler than the one Kuspit favors.

Humility is not such a bad thing. Kuspit himself unflinchingly criticizes the megalomania of the modernist and postmodernist avant gardes alike. Their arrogance cut them off from certain experiences, blinded them to the virtues of the targets of their snobbery, led them to ignore sciences and perspectives whose origins cannot

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be reconciled with their narrow viewpoint. Artists may be not only happier, but capable of greater achievement, if they choose for themselves the old role of servant of reality rather than unelected mental health director or amateur surgeon to the middle class; or its scourge, the fire-and-brimstone preacher or puritan iconoclast. Kuspit's invective against the postmodern artists he discusses may or may not be deserved; perhaps the problem with the Warhols and Koonses and Schnabels is not that they seek to please a public, but that they adopt as their justification the inhuman mask of the avant-garde artist, with its professions of superiority to hype and the base motivations of the marketplace. Without that mask, they would be charming jokesters, harmless entrepreneurs, talented celebrities at best.

Most of the great artists—the ancient, classical, and renaissance poets, the Greek and Elizabethan dramatists, the old masters of Europe and Asia, the baroque composers, the Victorian novelists, the ritual dancers, shamans, and painters of all human cultures—have been helpers, givers, gardeners, guides, cooks, magicians at the children's party. The philosophical depth and the clarion call to existential renewal that Kuspit mourns in the great modernists—and they were indeed great—need not be trumpeted or claimed by art, nor should its value entail the viewer's worship—or self-abasement. Works of art that transform our consciousness need not even be slightly discourteous if they are to work the most amazing metamorphoses upon us—consider Bach and Mozart. Artists of the twenty-first century may prove more effective if they work in relative anonymity, with less authority than they deserve, with less attention from the public, with no claims to originality, appealing for what support they need to the classical tradition passed down to them, accepting no credit for the mysterious innovations they are quietly making under the surface. Certainly there is a therapeutic role for the arts—even, on occasion, the pitiless surgical role of the satirist. But before attempting a cure, one should first be sure the patient is actually sick; the first Hippocratic priority is, after all, "do no harm."

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Donald Kuspit

MIDWIFE OF THE FUTURE?

ABSTRACT: *Frederick Turner argues in* The Culture of Hope *that avant-garde attitudes have become obsolete, inhibiting, and altogether blind to the creative possibilities of the future, with its new science and technology and triumphant capitalism. Paradoxically, Turner argues, the cultural future involves a regression to a classical spirit, indeed, to traditional modes of representation and a new religiosity. But Turner has sold avant-garde achievement short, even misrepresented it, however correct his analysis and assessment of its current character. He has also overestimated capitalism and religion, and his paradigm deploys clichés of decadence and renewal in a Manichean struggle. While his hopefulness is admirable, it is tragically inadequate.*

Frederick Turner, the author of *The Culture of Hope* (New York: Free Press, 1995) has a vision, a rather grand vision, of the future and its science and technology and the necessity of "opening up the artistic imagination to prepare for it" (1995b, 19)—as he says in his article "The New Era and Its Enemies," perhaps his most succinct statement of the issues. All kinds of changes are in the making, he argues, but there is massive, entrenched resistance to them. "Indeed, individually, there are very few in the late modernist/postmodernist mainstream with either the historical insight or the inclination to see the big picture in such a way as to be able to plan a

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concerted response to the coming changes" (ibid., 20). Most cultural critics have "little awareness that they might be holding back the creative splendor of a new era. Indeed, many individuals in the traditional avant-garde view themselves as idealistic defenders of freedom and creativity in the arts, even as they perpetuate conventional avant-garde attitudes that stifle the imaginations of young artists and thinkers" (ibid.).

Turner admits that his position may seem "paranoid," but adds that "the stakes are very high": "Without the exciting, joyful and idealistic future they can look forward to if they master the disciplines of culture, the youthful poor can only turn to the sensational substitutes that have always been offered to the human organism—sex, drugs, violence. If indeed the disciplines of culture themselves have been discredited (as postmodern aesthetics claims), so that there is no apprenticeship, no growing mastery in a difficult technique or craft, and therefore none of the self-respect that comes of such training, no amount of 'self-esteem' flummery will make up for the loss" (1995b, 20). Turner is entitled to these concerns as an educator of the young, but as a cultural critic, the question is whether his view of modern/postmodern attitudes and aesthetics is justified or whether these are whipping boys for his caring humanism.

I am fully sympathetic with humanism, but have my doubts about Turner's understanding of the modern/postmodern avant-garde. The avante-garde is certainly open to criticism. Its "negative" attitude—perhaps best exemplified by Picabia, who, as Duchamp admiringly said, was "a negator. . . . Whatever you said he contradicted" (Cabanne 1977, 32)—has come to seem an all-too-facile gospel, in retrospect more destructive than illuminating, more cynical than innovative, however much it may initially have cleared the artistic air. But Turner tends to see the avant-garde in a monolithic way that misrepresents its complexity and inner conflicts—for example, the fight to the death between expressionism and constructivism, exemplified by Donald Judd's formalist tirade against expressionism (1984). Turner short-circuits our understanding of the critical consciousness motivating the artistic avant-garde, viewing it as an insurmountable threat to his own more positive, inspirational criticality. His either/or mentality is all the more problematic because the moralistic new classicism for which he argues is not unrelated to the neoclassicism—the moral and stylistic rebellion

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against frivolous rococo—in which, according to many scholars, the avant-garde's critical posture was clearly visible for the first time.

"The time has now come for the long-delayed beginning of modernism's worthy successor," Turner writes in *The Culture of Hope*. "Throughout the country and the world there is a renewed interest in traditional artistic forms, combined with a lively and welcoming embrace of new science and technology" (19–20). On the one side, there is a world rapidly getting better; on the other side, a decadent, lagging avant-garde, holding back the corresponding changes in culture.

> Huge changes have recently occurred . . . that offer good prospects for peace and steady economic development. World communism has collapsed, and with it the economic and political appeal of socialism. The age of information economics has begun. The computer is multiplying the power of the brain as the steam engine and internal combustion engine multiplied the power of the body. Reproductive technology, together with increased human longevity, have made it possible for societies to survive without consigning one whole sex to the work of reproduction and nurture, and thus the talents of women have become available for other tasks. Chaos theory, ecological thinking, and an enlarged and deepened conception of evolution have revolutionized the sciences by making plausible a nonlinear creative potential to counteract the modernist conception of the universe as deterministic and decaying. Much of the erstwhile Third World has transformed itself into bustling capitalist democracies. Together, these forces spell the end of an old world-view, that of modernism and postscript postmodernism, and the beginning of a new. But these changes are still in their infancy, or even *in utero*, and they are tragically vulnerable to the forces that oppose them. A new era has begun, but it faces the baleful resentment of those who cling to the late-modernist and postmodernist era that gave it birth. (19)

In short, Turner paints, in rather grand strokes, a titanic struggle between the old and the new, or rather between the old new and the new new. Ironically, his is an updated version of the modernist belief that the old (traditional) order is dead but the new (utopian) order is not yet born, and that we, in our agonizing times, are heroically torn between the two. This is a version of an even older paradigm that posits a tension between the forces of decadence and those of renewal. Turner combines this view with the familiar "grandfather principle": overthrow the (trendy "avant-garde") fa-

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thers by regressing to the (unfashionable "classical") grandfathers—rebuilding, in a form appropriate for today, what was destroyed by their rebellious sons, who are now in a position of authority. A counter-revolution needs to follow the revolution: a return to true and tried values—revitalized and looking good again after their period in purdah—after the failure of modern values: a return to stability and order after an interlude of instability and disorder. (Of course, traditional values also once seemed unsuccessful—irrelevant in the then-brave new, modern world—which is why they were discarded.) Turner's big picture—*in nuce*, the discrepancy between contemporary society and contemporary culture, with their different ideas of "advance"—has an old frame.

The Evolution of Hope

The question of whether culture is equal to the surging new world order is, in *The Culture of Hope,* part of the larger question of whether the "liberal capitalistic democratic way" is up to the great changes in-the-making. Can liberal capitalism rise to the occasion of the new atmosphere of hope and realize the potential implicit in that atmosphere? It "has not yet totally failed," Turner warns, but its "systemic problems are . . . deep" (1995a, 31). It has become an *ancien régime* in all but name. It's worth quoting Turner at some length to understand how he sees our problem with hope:

> Our metabolic hopes for food, sex, and agonistic contestation, and our private hopes for social advantage, are accepted as a natural selfishness which, in a well-designed system, can be harnessed for the public good and act as an Invisible Hand to ensure prosperity and progress. Personal spiritual hopes are encouraged to flourish, but in a pluralistic milieu, with reference to an approved divine economy, and subject to the leveling demands of the marketplace. Dynastic hopes are discouraged, and the bonds of kinship either ignored or condemned as nepotism. Religious hopes are permitted without comment, but society is protected by legal means from them and the conflicts they engender. Social hopes—equality, justice—are highly valorized and cultivated, but only when consistent with the individual's hopes for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and with religious freedom. Wide margins, by which contradictory hopes are spaced out and thus need not encounter each other, are provided by

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> an overarching ideology of pluralism, relativism, and commonsense; and the contradictions which still occur are resolved by the market, where conflicting hopes and values are reduced to money prices and haggled to a mutually agreeable reconciliation in those terms. (31)

What Turner calls "leftist modernism" (32) or "avant-garde modernism and [its] last postmodern fibrillations" (266) offers one solution to these contradictions—a very wrong one. He is, as he says, "unsparing" in his "criticism" of the avant-garde (ibid.). Indeed, he sometimes goes to *ad hominem* extremes to make his case: "Like the Jodie Foster character in *The Silence of the Lambs*, we have gone to school with monsters, with the Hannibal Lecters (or cannibal lecteurs) who, in biting the text into pieces with their deconstructive slashes and parentheses, have bitten off the faces of their authors" (270–71). Or, in a more heckling vein: "Lorenz points out that species without a territorial and aggressive drive, like school herrings, do not recognize each other as individuals and thus are incapable of any personal or prolonged pair-bond. (Herring, then, would seem to exemplify the ideal sexual life as envisaged by those psychologists in the French tradition, like Lacan, Foucault, Deleuze, and Guattari, who make themselves the enemies of repression.)" (170).

Modernism marks "the end of one cultural epoch"; Turner marks "the beginning of another" (266). Where modernism represents "the failure of avant-garde hope" (55), Turner represents "a new constellation of hope," which he characterizes as "evolutionary hope" (267). The modernist "worldview not only accepted our biologically based personal hopes—for sex, pleasure, leisure, and so on—but elevated them, via a naturalist or existentialist philosophy, to the status which had previously been held by the spiritual personal hopes" (32), repudiating the view "that our metabolic desires might themselves infringe upon the freedom and dignity of the person" (33). In contrast, Turner asserts that in his "new regime of hope, metabolic hopes and bodily desires are accepted and celebrated as part of our evolutionary past," along with "personal hopes for social advantage" and "personal spiritual hopes" (267–68). In the new order, our varied hopes and desires would be hierarchically integrated, so that the contradictions and conflicts between them would be resolved.

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Religion and Capitalism to the Rescue

In the new order, freedom and dignity will not be compromised by biology because unlike the modernists, Turner will place biology under the supervision of religion. "Religious hope would once more have a central place" (268)—indeed, play a pivotal evolutionary role—in the new hope-filled version of human integrity. Turner writes: "I espouse—on new grounds—the traditional assignment of hope to a place among the three theological virtues: if faith is the affirmation of what was, and love the affirmation of what is, then hope is the affirmation of what is to come" (29). The new ground of hope is

> syncretism: the incorporation within higher and deeper religious ideas of the tenets, theologies, and observances of all the religious traditions, together with the new revelations that continuously pour forth from the sciences. Religion would be at the leading edge of science. Traditional religious concepts and metaphors would be recognized as culture-bound, partial, but valid formulations of the evolutionary direction we should take and have in general been taking, and as the missing component of social hope. (268–69)

For Turner, avant-garde hope "tended to replace" religious hope "with new theologies which, variously, elevated the artist into the position of deity, borrowed the Rousseauvian idols of the noble savage or the Marxist idols of the proletariat, or, as with the Paris Symbolistes and California hippies, sought mystical experience in drugs and the extremes of sensory perception" (35–36). The avant-garde thus substituted "the expectation of revolution" (43) for evolution: it replaced evolutionary hope with revolutionary hope. But, Turner declares, "there will be no redeeming social revolution, that will at one blow dispel prejudice, poverty, social conflict, and privilege" (ibid.). Indeed, "to hope for it now is simply to hamper what real social progress is possible within an evolving capitalism" (ibid.)—the very same "democratic capitalism" whose "disgusting" "hypocrisies" and "glaring" "weaknesses" (ibid., 32) the avant-garde rebelled against. These weaknesses are more apparent than real, Turner argues—despite the fact that he presents a rather damning, lengthy list of accusations against democratic capitalism (see the last extended quotation above). Clearly, for Turner, capitalism is our last and only hope: for it is able to improve itself through "*reflexivity or*

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feedback," which is "*the fundamental tendency or theme of the universe*" (220). Turner proposes, in effect, a grand alliance between capitalism and his new religion as well as science—which seems to me as utopian an idea as avant-garde revolution.

Thus, while gloating over the failure of the "modernist-left" revolution, Turner speaks of "the compassionate love that exists in the interstices of the market economy and the fundamental trust and fellowship implicit in all trade" (39), and declares that "the economic collapse of the Soviet bloc was the direct consequence of the gigantic mistake of trying to repair the deficiences of human experience by abolishing it" (ibid.). Here is yet another version of the old Manichean battle: the capitalist forces of goodness and light and mercy against the stupid old self-deceptive evil empire. Turner denies that his book is "just another piece of left-bashing," but in fact he can never resist an opportunity to mock the left, no matter how small: "Imagine how the theft of a public library book by a bright avant-garde intellectual might be defended in the late sixties, the seventies, the eighties, and the nineties" (43). Spare the rod and spoil the child seems to be the essence of Turner's often moralistic, not to say didactic, hortatory style. It is one thing to say that "within the avant-garde there is now no rational mechanism for self-criticism or for a radical revision of its own flawed premises, because it has for its own purposes discredited the very logic, rationality, and evidence by which such a debate might be conducted" (37): it is another thing to fault the avant-garde for incivility.

Defending the Avant-Garde (as It Once Was)

It is certainly true that the avant-garde has become redundant and obsolete, however much it continues to be intellectually celebrated. But I think Turner has sold the avant-garde rather short, all the more so by conflating its social and esthetic variants—which, after Courbet, went their separate revolutionary (and evolutionary) ways, while continuing to flirt with each other. The triumphs of the esthetic avant-garde should not be obscured by the failure—if lasting influence—of its non-identical social twin.

Socially, avant-garde leftism can be understood as part of capitalism's self-criticism, while esthetic, avant-garde modernism can be understood as a critique of a hackneyed and stagnant—not simply

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traditional—idea of beauty. This idea, representational beauty, was no longer appropriate to the modern world, and thus stifled rather than facilitated creativity. Turner is as in love with beauty as Keats ever was, respects it as "the highest integrative level of understanding and the most comprehensive capacity for effective action" (218), foresees a new "classical" beauty involving technology and a new Old Masterism, but he doesn't understand that the avant-garde break with and attack on traditional beauty was warranted. Representational esthetics got what it deserved in Dadaism. The new beauty of modern art, in its variety of forms—all of which seem beyond Turner's comprehension, or at least serious interest—was a necessary alternative, not only historically but emotionally.

Avant-garde beauty may have become as decadent, bankrupt, and institutional as traditional beauty was when Manet assaulted it, but it has left behind monuments that are not yet of merely archival interest. These monuments continue to move us and continue to be discovered: they may only be fully discovered and appreciated and experienced in the future, much the way we have discovered and experience Mozart and Beethoven in a way that they were not appreciated in their own day. Turner's rage has anesthetized him to avant-garde art, which he treats with selective inattention: John Cage, Karen Finley, and the Whitney Biennial get the back of his conservative hand, but he doesn't dare take on (to stay with comparable artists and situations) Cy Twombly, Joseph Beuys, and Documenta. And why doesn't he risk hurling his slings and arrows at Kirchner, Picasso, Max Ernst, Miro, Pollock, and De Kooning, to mention some important avant-garde artists? It is false and foolish to lump all their work together as "the artistic productions of the radical Left" and assert that they "tend to be either indifferent to technique and craftsmanship or blatantly in violation of them" (8).

Turner wants to set up rules—controls—where he believes there are none. He seems to think that because there is a "new movement" in art, involving "the new paradigm of the radical center" (13)—yet another "Counter-Modern Movement" (Menton 1983, 15)—the art of the old avant-garde movement(s) has been discredited. But just because there is "a return to classical forms, genres, and techniques in the arts" (Turner, 13) doesn't mean the unclassical modes have lost their critical point. While there is "disillusionment with seriality, the twelve-tone row, and atonality, a renewed interest in worldwide folk music, a search for the deep pan-human roots of

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melody, and a focus on the immediacy of performance, improvisation, and the context of audience and performer" (14), serial, twelve-tone row, atonal music has not lost its power. The fact that "in visual arts we find a strong return to representation, to landscape and the figure, a rejection of the hegemonic modernist authority of abstraction" (14) doesn't mean that abstraction has lost its significance. Turner's neat, sweeping way of dividing the arts—he applies the same simplistic Solomonic wisdom to poetry, theater, fiction, film, dance—into an avant-garde and post-avant-garde "new classical spirit" (15) falsifies both what he likes and what he hates.

It was such avant-garde composers as Bartok and Stravinsky who renewed interest in folk music by incorporating it in their works, and it was modernist abstraction that attempted to produce a "panhuman" art by articulating "pure forms" that were presumed to be universally (cross-culturally and generically) evocative. Emphasis on "immediacy of performance, improvisation, and the context of audience and performer" is modern, not "classical"—however the classical might be conceived. Modernism has consistently been concerned with the landscape and the figure; much of the Cubism of Picasso and Braque involve both, as does the Expressionism of Kirchner and for that matter, Kandinsky. It's just that their treatment of landscape and figure was not representational. Does Turner really think that while "the new (classical, realist) art is, at its best, informed by profound thought, philosophical inquiry, and severe ethical and spiritual concerns" (14), the old (unclassical, abstract) avant-garde art was not? Turner forces his case for the new by cavalierly—absurdly—dismissing the old. The new classical representation may be less alien—at least on the surface—but that hardly means it is more spiritual and ethical than avant-garde abstraction. I have no doubt that Vincent Desiderio is an important "philosophical realist," but I don't think his work is more important and philosophical than the abstract paintings of Clyfford Still or Barnett Newman. Indeed, the issue is how the different visual modes of being "philosophical" inform the "philosophy" involved.

A Future Tainted by Tragedy?

I am sympathetic to many of Turner's judgments and goals, and admire the eloquence and ambition of his book, but its comprehen-

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sive, idealistic "futurology" (269) is unconvincing. "The future will never cease to contain a tragic element," he writes (ibid.), but he plays down this element, so determined is he to find happiness and light in the future. In fact his book is a kind of theodicy—an evolutionary, teleological theodicy, which attempts to argue that history, however ostensibly tragic, has a spiritual purpose. All's well that ends well, however much suffering and stupidity there are on the way to the end. In other words, Turner finds a final and divine cause in history; it is not just sound and fury signifying nothing. Turner's is an ancient mystification of history, as well as a familiar attempt to awaken from what James Joyce called the nightmare of history, or to find a thread leading one through and finally out of its labyrinth. It is premised on the illusion that one can escape from, even altogether transcend, history: an attempt to see the mysterious hand of God—evolution (which is also mystified)—at work in history, even at its most shameful. (Turner's discussion of "the politics of shame" is particularly insightful [44–58]. I agree that "beauty equally avoids the Left [and the Right], and for the same reason: its denial of shame" [52].)

Thus, on the one hand Turner says "that because the triumph of good is not guaranteed, or is not in the cards at all, or is achieved only at the tragic sacrifice of an equal good, or by a lie, conscious being has a liability and talent for suffering that is exactly matched to its own magnitude" (258); but, on the other hand, he also asserts that "it may turn out that a religious life, with its resistances against default impulses and its strange conflicts at ninety degrees, so to speak, to the normal tropisms of human motive, works even better, or is at least a good general preventive medicine for the addictions we call insanity" (259). Turner seems to be an advocate of the capitalist religious life—the religion of capitalism, cashing in on the accumulated capital of religion?—which is perhaps not the worst thing to be, if it gives one hope. But to be a sophisticated advocate of a "Whiteheadean religious worldview," as Turner implicitly is (281), is one thing, while to be naive about capitalism—to assume that "progress and economic health are dependent upon one central human activity: exchange" (37)—is another.

Trying to make the best of what is central to capitalism, Turner conceives of economic exchange as an intimate relationship. This is to be *really* hopeful.

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Nathan Kogan

REFLECTIONS ON AESTHETICS AND EVOLUTION

ABSTRACT: *Experimental research with human infants has demonstrated a level of sensitivity to music comparable to that of musically unsophisticated adults. This evidence points to the biologically hard-wired nature of musical responsivity, and further raises the question of the evolutionary roots of the phenomenon. The question is addressed by examining (1) the ontogenetic and phylogenetic order in which speech and music are acquired, (2) the possible adaptive properties of music and dance, and (3) cognitive evolutionary retrodictions about the period in prehistory when art began. Much uncertainty continues to surround these issues, but there is a strong indication that the performing and visual arts are natural phenomena with distinctively different evolutionary roots.*

The past decade has witnessed the rapid growth of a new interdisciplinary field of theoretical and empirical inquiry that has been assigned the label of "evolutionary psychology." The field has attracted the attention of anthropologists, biologists, archaeologists, paleontologists, and philosophers, as well as psychologists, and its recent popularization has fostered heated arguments in general intellectually oriented periodicals.[1] Specialized journals and interdisciplinary professional societies support work in the field,[2] even

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while relevant articles become a regular feature of mainstream journals in psychology and the social-behavioral sciences.

Evolutionary psychology (see Barkow, Cosmides, and Tooby 1992) has prompted some authors to attribute the beauty we see in landscapes to the adaptive advantage that would have accrued to hunter-gatherers who preferred broad savannas where they could spot predators from a distance to the dark forests where they would be easy prey (Orians and Heerwagen 1992). My own first venture into evolutionary psychology (Kogan and Mills 1992) was an attempt to explain how men and women respond to photographs of people of various ages (Kogan 1979, 1982).[3] Other research based on photographs demonstrates that male respondents of various ethnicities are remarkably uniform in the attractiveness ratings they give to women, regardless of ethnicity (Cunningham 1986). These uniformities also extend to the perception of full-body schematic drawings.[4] The cross-cultural stability of these findings undermines the notion of cultural variations in physical attractiveness, suggesting instead that individuals are equipped with a set of beauty detectors that manifest little inter-individual or inter-cultural variation. Evidence that six-month-old infants mirror the attractiveness judgments of adults gives credence to the view that these beauty detectors are hard-wired (Langlois, Ritter, Roggman, and Vaughn 1991). The adaptive advantage of such beauty detectors lies in the link between beauty and health or vigor, a link that would likely enhance reproductive success in the form of healthier (and more attractive) offspring.[5] Along similar lines is the evidence that female attractiveness enhances desirability to resource-rich potential mates (e.g., Buss 1994; Kenrick and Keefe 1992).

Infants and Music

The attractiveness of face and body is obviously but one form of beauty; beauty, in turn, is but one form of aesthetic experience. Can evolutionary psychology help us understand artistic beauty?

There is a body of rigorous experimental work on the musical perception of human infants.[6] This work clearly demonstrates that prior to one year of age, infants have almost all of the skills of musical perception present in musically unsophisticated adults (see Deliege and Sloboda 1996). Western infants can use these skills to

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respond to non-Western (Javanese) music (see Lynch, Eilers, Oller, and Urbano 1990), undermining the view that they are learned. Instead, it appears that musical responsiveness is biologically hard-wired.

Researchers in the field of infant music perception have nonetheless avoided the question of the possible evolutionary origin of such skills. Such hesitancy can be readily understood, given the speculative nature of answers to this question (e.g., Kogan 1994). One of the difficulties here is whether to seek explanations for the musical sensitivities of infants within a strictly adaptationist framework, or to allow that they may be byproducts of more fundamental adaptations (e.g., the prosodic vocal communication of mother to infant described by Fernald 1992). Strict adaptationists, by contrast, emphasize the critical role of music (in conjunction with dance and possibly body painting) in prehistoric rituals and ceremonies. These are seen as promoting group morale and identity, such that tribes engaging in such practices would have been expected to survive, while tribes lacking these aesthetic features would presumably have become extinct. This would leave music and other aesthetic sensitivities as part of our genetic heritage.

Such controversies do not lend themselves to resolution by experiment. One is forced to proceed in a speculative vein, reaching for reliable evidence (proximal or distal) from diverse sources to build a case for a strictly "adaptationist" as opposed to a "byproduct" view or vice versa.

Music and Language

One of the more persistent and perplexing issues is the evolutionary relationship of musical sensitivity and speech. Hanuš Papoušek (1996) has observed that the human vocal tract serves the dual functions of a communicative speech organ and a music-making instrument, raising the question of which function appeared earlier in human evolution. The question is particularly hard to answer because both functions presume the presence of language—communicative speech in one case, vocal music in the other. Furthermore, the earliest vocal music most likely took place in a communicative context, whether in the form of a mother singing to a child or group singing (accompanied by expressive movement) in prehis-

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toric rituals and ceremonies. As Mechthild Papoušek (1996) points out, mothers across human cultures speak to their infant children melodically. In Papoušek's view, this allows the infant to gain the emotional satisfaction of tension arousal and subsequent relief. That prosody in maternal speech can have these biologically mediated effects on infants clearly points to an adaptive advantage: emotional bonding between mother and infant. But can one generalize from prosody to the infant's adult-like sensitivity to music that has no apparent connection to maternal communication?

Papoušek argues that one can by pointing to the "multimedia" quality of mother-child interaction. Beyond prosody in maternal speech, infants are subjected to rhythmic stimulation in various sensory modes—tactile (e.g., stroking and patting), kinesthetic (e.g., hand or foot shaking), vestibular (e.g., rocking), and visual (e.g., maternal head nodding or shaking). Moreover, mothers in many cultures carry their babies close to their bodies, subjecting the infant to the regular rhythms of its mother's breathing, heartbeat, walking, and work patterns. Mothers in certain cultures also carry infants while dancing in social groups. Infant-directed prosody may be a modern remnant of prehistoric multisensory rhythmic stimulation in work and ceremonial contexts.

By contrast, John Barrow's (1995) treatment of the music-language relationship is more equivocal. While granting that both musical and linguistic skills involve hard-wired genetic programming, Barrow attributes universality to language but only a "limited distribution" to musical ability. Accordingly, he favors the "byproduct" view: musical sensitivities evolved out of mental abilities serving some other adaptive purpose. But Barrow also points out that language is processed in the left hemisphere of the brain, while in musically unsophisticated adults music is processed in the right hemisphere. It is difficult to envision how musical sensitivity could have evolved from linguistic skill, if the two are located in different regions of the brain. On the basis of a thorough examination of this and other evidence, Rochel Gelman and Kimberly Brenneman (1994) argue strongly against the view that music and language are parts of the same system. Animal studies, neuropsychological evidence, and evolutionary theory are consistent in pointing to their independence from each other. The case for infants' sensitivity to music as a byproduct of maternal prosody now appears weak, although the controversy continues to flourish.[7]

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Group Selection and Aesthetics

The strict adaptationist perspective relies on a controversial premise: group selection. Groups that used ceremonial music and dance are thought to have been more likely to survive than other groups. This view necessarily implies the position advanced by David Sloan Wilson and Elliott Sober (1994), that natural selection operates not only within groups (on individuals) but between them. Wilson has devoted much effort to disputing the widely accepted claim of G. C. Williams (1966) that group-level adaptations are rare and possibly nonexistent. Most evolutionary biologists ask, "What traits would maximize the fitness of individuals, relative to other individuals in the population?" (Wilson 1997, 345). But the rejection of between-group selection is no longer universal, as increasing numbers of researchers accept that there may be selection for traits that maximize the fitness of groups, sometimes at the expense of individual self-interest. (The Hutterites are cited as an example of a well-adapted group that, like hunter-gatherer tribes, lacks status distinctions and deemphasizes self-interest.)[8] But this controversy has not yet been taken up by aesthetic evolutionists, despite suggestions in Barrow 1995 and McNeill 1995 that group selection may account for aesthetic inheritances. Both authors note that music and dance are prevalent in all contemporary cultures, suggesting that any groups lacking those aesthetic attributes did not manage to survive. William McNeill has coined the term "muscular bonding" to refer to the emotional response that ensues when people move together rhythmically in dance and drill.[9]

As an aid to keeping time, rhythmic drumming must have enhanced the power of the communal dance experience. Barrow notes how easy it is to make instruments for rhythmic drumming, and believes that these were available to early humans well before the emergence of language.[10] In McNeill's view, the emotional solidarity induced by hours of moving together rhythmically led to the formation of primary communities that had a better prospect of survival than did small non-dancing hominid groups. McNeill goes so far as to suggest that hunting became more efficient in groups whose solidarity was enhanced by the opportunity to rehearse past hunting successes in ceremonial dances. He also credits dance with enabling cooperation among larger numbers of individuals, thereby

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increasing the food supply and subsequent breeding success. As McNeill notes, much energy is expended in extended dancing in small communities—energy that could have gone into economically productive work. Hence, he presumes that dances must serve a social function. This scenario is unquestionably speculative, although it receives strong support from the work of Barrow and Ellen Dissanayake, and from the Wilson-Sober argument for group selection.

There can be no question that dance and music are ubiquitous, and that young infants possess innate musical sensitivity. Accordingly, there must be ancient scenarios that can account for this contemporary genetic heritage, and those spelled out in the sources cited above are as reasonable as any that can be envisioned.

Art and Religion

It is impossible to discuss the origin of aesthetics without any reference to the origin of religion. As noted by the eminent classical scholar, Walter Burkert (1996), dance may have played an important role in hunting, warfare, and mating, but of no lesser significance is its role in religious phenomena. As both McNeill and Barrow have noted, dance participation for hours at a time is likely to induce trance states and efforts to communicate with the world of unseen spirits. This must eventually have led to religious ceremonies. In due course, the shaman appeared, chosen for his skill in gaining access to the spirit world and exorcising spirits from the human body. Exorcism often occurs in the context of rhythmic drumming, with the entire community participating in a festival.

Dance and music have promoted religious inspiration throughout the history of *Homo sapiens.* Religion has often facilitated group identification and solidarity. One cannot ignore, however, the sexually arousing aspect of dance and rhythmic drumming, and the pairing-off of participants as a likely consequence, in obvious contradiction to the shared emotional solidarity aroused by ceremonial events. McNeill suggests that our ancestors were somehow able to make an effective separation between community-wide events and sexual pairing-off, but he offers no hypotheses as to how this might have been accomplished.[11] The theory of multilevel selection proposed by Wilson and Sober (1994, 1996) offers a possible explana-

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tion in suggesting that group selection may coexist with individual selection. "Studies of hunter-gatherer societies almost invariably reveal a strong element of both communalism *and* individualism" (Wilson and Sober 1996, 786). Forces that forge groups into cohesive units are balanced against forces that guard against possible exploitation within groups.

Given that sexual pairing-off carries the implication of intragroup competition for reproductive success, there would have to be equally powerful centripetal counterforces to preclude the dissolution of group solidarity. In his commentary on Wilson and Sober, John Barresi (1996) borrows from Herbert Simon (1990) in proposing a "docility" or "pious" gene that, if widely held within a group, could be selected for despite the presence of centrifugal psychological mechanisms. In Barresi's view, "religious phenomena epitomize just those situations where this conflict of mechanisms is most intense" (778). It is important to note, however, that the conflict described by Barresi is between authoritative group religious norms and conscious individual self-interest. Whether group norms would continue to hold up against the sexual urges aroused by extended exposure to loud rhythmic drumming remains open to question. Whereas such stimulation has not been an integral part of Western religious services in recent centuries, pre-Lenten Mardi-Gras carnivals are one example of a (temporary) relaxation of sacred norms that may serve an adaptive tension-releasing function for individuals without exerting a destructive influence on group solidarity. Thus, music and dance can serve both group and individual interests.

Mimesis and Visual Art

In the preceding sections of this essay, I have attempted to make a case for the adaptive function of early dance and musical activities that might account for the surprising musical sensitivities displayed by human infants. Yet neither dance nor music emerged in our distant evolutionary relatives—the higher apes. At some point in our evolutionary history, the cognitive architecture of the brain changed in a direction that permitted these art forms to become manifest in some rudimentary fashion.

Merlin Donald (1991, 1993) has advanced a theory of cognitive evolution that locates the emergence of motor and nonverbal skills

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and representations in *Homo erectus* more than 300,000 years ago. He has given the label "mimetic culture" to this stage of cultural evolution. In Donald's view, apes are characterized by "episodic culture," i.e., they react to real-world situations as they occur, do not reflect upon them, and recall them only when a similar situation arises again. By contrast, *Homo erectus*, though lacking language, allegedly possessed virtually all of the motor and nonverbal skills typical of modern humans. The implications for the performing arts are manifold. Mimetic action—the use of the body as a communicative device—might have marked the beginning of pantomime and ritual dance. Construction of simple percussive instruments might mark the beginning of deliberate rhythmic music. Increases in the forms of emotional expression might have led to greater diversity in social interaction scenarios, and eventually to charade-like games and drama of a nonverbal character. In his treatment of the beginnings of language, Darwin (1871) proposed a preliminary phase of "rudimentary song," a likely precursor of prosody and the rhythmic, melodic aspects of singing. With the emergence of language, Donald infers a transition to mythic culture in which oral story-telling is central to the growth of group-distinctive myths. A third and final transition to "theoretic culture" occurs when symbol notations are developed for writing, number, music, etc., making opera and theater feasible.

Are these anything more than "just-so" stories for which solid evidence is lacking? Donald offers three arguments for his claims (also see Wynn 1993). The first imagines the kind of culture that would be intermediate between apes and modern humans. Since there are no current mimetic cultures (language is now universal), such a thought experiment is justified if supportive evidence is available. A second argument provides such evidence, in the form of "vestiges": individuals who lack language and yet display the representational and communicative skills attributed to the mimetic stage. Donald offers examples of deaf mutes, prelinguistic children, and individuals who lose language through brain damage. All of these appear to possess or retain a range of mimetic skills. A third and final source of evidence (cited by Wynn 1993) is the archeological record—the discovery of stone tools of a characteristic symmetrical shape, produced by *Homo erectus* in an obviously intentional manner that is well beyond the capacity of apes.

Although supportive, this evidence is limited and indirect. None

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of it directly proves a mimetic stage in which art originated. Clearly, we are left with a speculative but highly articulate theory of origins that is unquestionably more than a "just-so" story, but not quite acceptable as the final word on the matter. It is very much to Donald's credit, however, that he undertook the difficult task of inferring the cognitive skills prevalent during a long-past stage of our evolutionary history, despite the limited nature of the available supportive evidence.

Although acknowledging his debt to Donald's effort to trace the evolutionary development of the mind, Steven Mithen (1996) offers an alternative cognitively oriented theory that departs in fundamental ways from Donald's approach. Donald depends heavily on neurological and behavioral evidence for the relative independence of motor and nonverbal from language-related skills, a preliminary contrast of little relevance in Mithen's theory. Nor is there a mimetic stage in Mithen's schema; accordingly, he does not acknowledge the roles music and dance may have played in our evolutionary history. Yet the subtitle of Mithen's 1996 book speaks of *The Cognitive Origins of Art, Religion, and Science*. Where Donald focuses primarily on the performing arts, Mithen pays attention almost exclusively to visual arts: painting, sculpture, and decoration.

Mithen leans quite heavily on theorists who emphasize the modularity of the human mind—Jerry Fodor (1983), Howard Gardner (1983), and Leda Cosmides and John Tooby (1994)—and on developmental psychologists concerned about the development of the mind's modules—Patricia Greenfield (1991), Annette Karmiloff-Smith (1992), and Dan Sperber (1994).[12] Despite long-standing doubt as to whether ontogeny actually recapitulates phylogeny, Mithen essentially accepts the principle that "the stages in the development of the child's mind reflect the stages of cognitive evolution in our ancestors" (56). Much of his book develops this theme.

Cosmides and Tooby treat the mind as a Swiss Army Knife (SAK): a collection of specialized modules selected in accord with their adaptiveness in dealing with the problems and tasks posed by the social and physical environment. The presumption is that the modules are essentially independent of each other, much as are the separate blades of a knife. Other modular-oriented theorists, such as Gardner, argue that the modules interact in the course of problem solving and decision making. Mithen is able to accept both of the foregoing perspectives by assigning them to different stages of our

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evolutionary history and our ontogenetic development. The SAK model, in Mithen's view, characterized the thinking of our early ancestors—*Homo habilis, Homo erectus,* and archaic *Homo sapiens.* With the advent of modern humans (*Homo sapiens sapiens*) about 100,000 years ago, he presumes that a progressive increase in "cognitive fluidity" took hold, implying a generalized type of intelligence that integrated the separate modules. This permitted them to interact smoothly in dealing with specific problems. Mithen maintains that the beginning of art and religion can be traced to the onset and growth of this cognitive fluidity in early modern humans, starting approximately 60,000 years ago.

Before the SAK mind, according to Mithen, our early primate ancestors had a global type of intelligence, possibly supplemented by a module of social intelligence. The type of general intelligence displayed by chimpanzees differs, he contends, from the generalized intelligence of modern humans, which is based on the integration of a multiplicity of specific intelligences (modules). Thus, between the two generalized intelligences characterizing our earliest ancestors and ourselves lay the SAK-type mind.

Mithen tries to buttress his evolutionary model with evidence suggestive of comparable ontogenetic development in children. He cites Patricia Greenfield's claim that modularization is absent in children below the age of two, who function with a general-purpose learning program. After the age of two, Mithen holds that SAK-type modularity takes over as the child acquires intuitive knowledge about language, physics, psychology, and biology. Finally, as Annette Karmiloff-Smith maintains, SAK functioning is replaced by mapping across these separate domains.

The guiding metaphor that Mithen employs to describe both phylogenetic and ontogenetic stages is that of a cathedral comprising several chapels (each of which represents a different type of intelligence—technical, natural history, social, and linguistic). The chapels surround a central nave representing general intelligence. During the SAK phase of development, the doors and windows separating the chapels remain closed. They open up during the subsequent phase of cognitive fluidity, implying that the diverse forms of intelligence have begun to interact with each other. This is the period (approximately 60,000 years ago, which he calls the Middle/Upper Paleolithic transition) to which Mithen attributes the beginning of art and religion. Here we find representational art

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in the form of small statuettes (e.g., a man with a lion's head carved from a mammoth tusk), items intended for personal decoration, and the remarkable cave paintings in France and Spain. As Mithen sees it, this was possible because, for the first time, technical, social, and natural history modules previously insulated from each other were now combined. Anthropomorphism and totemism combine natural history (thinking about animals) and social (thinking about people) intelligences that were formerly compartmentalized: the modern human mind can think of people as animals or animals as people. Hence a man with the head of a lion, and the emergence of art in which the power of metaphor and analogy seems to have been unleashed.

In Mithen's view, the cognitive changes that fostered the beginning of art also prompted the development of religion. With enhanced cognitive fluidity, paintings on cave walls became the locus for ceremonial and ritualistic activities. They represented mythological worlds that linked participants to ancestors and ancestral activities and events, as in the Dreamtime of the Australian aboriginals.

As did Merlin Donald, Steven Mithen offers a persuasive model of the cognitive strengths and limitations of our ancestors and the cognitive changes that took place on the path to the modern human mind. Although Mithen brings considerable supporting evidence to bear, the possibility that he is telling an elaborate "just-so" story cannot be cast aside. In some ways, Mithen's account is more convincing than Donald's, particularly with respect to the origins of art. Since Mithen places those origins considerably closer to the present, the archeological evidence is much more powerful than what Donald was able to gather for *Homo erectus* as the first artist. Prehistoric sculpture, painting, and jewelry materially strengthens Mithen's account.

As we have noted, Mithen is silent on the issue of the origins of music, dance, and song. Indeed, he is puzzled by the use of red ochre among early modern humans. Although he considers the possibility of body painting, he gives no thought to the likelihood of a connection to ceremonial music and dance. This points up a lacuna in his theory. Recall that the period prior to two years of age is described by Mithen as governed by a premodular generalized intelligence. This is not consistent with the observed musical sensitivity of infants with which we began—one among an array of

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specific independent modules typical of infants younger than one year old (see Karmiloff-Smith 1992). Furthermore, cross-domain mapping is apparent in the metaphoric capacities of three- and four-year-olds (see Winner 1988), an age where Mithen would expect few intermodular connections. If ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny, it would appear that modularity has prevailed from the time of our primate ancestors, and that both ontogenetic and phylogenetic development entail increasing functional connectedness between the modules.[13]

Donald and Mithen agree that painting, sculpture, and jewelry probably originated with *Homo sapiens* approximately 60,000 years ago. For Donald, this marked the beginning of symbolic culture; for Mithen, it heralded the emergence of cognitive fluidity and cross-domain mapping. It is in respect to our earlier evolutionary history that the authors depart. Donald maintains that the mimetic culture of *Homo erectus* was probably able to initiate and sustain a diversity of rudimentary artistic activities—dance movement, percussive music, nonverbal song. Mithen essentially sidesteps these possible artistic beginnings, and might well consider them unlikely on the basis of inadequate cognitive fluidity in the early human mind.

Art and Group Adaptation

It should be apparent from the discussion thus far that investigators seeking the ancestral origins of aesthetic inclinations must possess more than an average level of tolerance for ambiguity. The work of evolutionary researchers in several disciplines has failed to give us a definitive answer to the simple question with which we began: How can we account for the adult-like musical sensitivities of young infants? (This is common to attempts to establish the evolutionary origin of any psychological trait.)

At one end of the current scholarly spectrum are those who insist that musical awareness is a byproduct of language acquisition. Such a view would attribute infants' early musical sensitivity to the prosodic features of their mothers' speech. At the opposite extreme are those who lean on neurological evidence pointing to the localization of music and language in opposite hemispheres of the brain. Such findings weaken (but do not destroy) the view that prosody has a causal influence on musical sensitivity. At the phylogenetic

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level, there is a fairly clear indication of a prelinguistic phase in the evolutionary record, which Donald calls "mimetic culture." If Donald is correct in his assumption that *Homo erectus* had all of the motor and non-verbal skills of modern humans, it would be difficult to imagine that this species would fail to produce music, dance, and nonverbal song. Of course, we can never know with complete confidence whether Donald is entirely correct in his assumptions.

When I first engaged the present topic about five years ago, I favored the strict adaptationist program and supported the view that groups lacking music and dance had a lesser chance of survival relative to groups that possessed those attributes. Given that all contemporary cultures have some form of music and dance, this assumpton, although lacking an empirical basis, nevertheless seemed to possess an inherent logic. The fact remained, however, that the large majority of evolutionary theorists viewed group selection as rare, if not impossible. Natural selection, they claimed, is strictly an individual, not a group phenomenon.

In the past few years, papers published by David Sloan Wilson and his colleagues have justifiably attracted numerous converts to the group-selection position. Given the communal settings in which rhythmic music and dance would originally have taken place, it is difficult, if not impossible, to trace these arts through prehistory via mechanisms of individual selection.

The notion of "muscular bonding" advanced by William McNeill is particularly credible. We can only speculate, of course, but it is entirely conceivable that McNeill has pinpointed the psychological mechanism whereby dance and music exert their powerful influence on group identification and solidarity. In combination, Wilson's group-selection proposal and McNeill's ideas about muscular bonding put some flesh on the bare bones of the adaptationist explanation for our genetically programmed musical heritage.

In the meantime, we have been treated to two strikingly different theories, advanced by Merlin Donald and Steven Mithen, regarding the origins of the modern mind. Both theories have important implications for the origins of art. Whereas Donald's approach is relevant to both the performing and the visual arts, Mithen's work is exclusively focused on the latter. If Donald is correct, we can trace the performing arts back to *Homo erectus*. The visual arts, on the other hand, required the emergence of *Homo sapiens*. The musical sensitivities of infants, it should be noted, considerably precede

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their ability to draw. This may represent nothing more than a difference between a receptive and a productive skill. But it may also suggest that, where the arts are concerned, ontogeny does recapitulate phylogeny.

NOTES

1. See Gould 1997 and Pinker 1997.
2. Two such societies are the Human Behavior and Evolution Society and the International Society for Human Ethology. The former has *Evolution and Human Behavior* (published by Elsevier) as its official journal. The latter publishes a quarterly *Human Ethology Bulletin*. *Human Nature* (published by Aldine de Gruyter) also offers numerous articles relevant to evolutionary psychology.
3. This study represented part of a larger body of work in the social psychology of aging with a special emphasis on attitudes and beliefs (Kogan 1979, 1982). Consistent with my prior training and background, the work was pursued within a sociocultural framework. Bringing an evolutionary perspective to bear represented a radical departure from previous research in the area (see Kogan and Mills, 1992). Such a perspective can help explain cross-cultural uniformities in young males' biases in mate choice.
4. Singh 1993 found that women's waist-to hip ratio is relevant to judgments of attractiveness and health.
5. Kogan 1994 discusses the issue of the relation between attractiveness and health in the context of the Darwin–Wallace debate regarding natural and sexual selection. See Cronin 1991 for a detailed analysis of this debate.
6. Prior evolutionary approaches had focused heavily on the visual arts (e.g., Dissanayake 1992; Pfeiffer 1982).
7. Lynch 1996 raises the possibility that *Homo habilis* was capable of musical representation, and might even have engaged in a primitive form of singing (a precursor to spoken language). Wilkins and Wakefield 1996, however, argues forcefully for the parallel development of music and language from an evolutionary perspective.
8. See the 33 brief commentaries expressing various degrees of support (or lack of support) for Wilson and Sober 1994's group-selection position. Six additional commentaries can be found in Wilson and Sober 1996, and both sets of commentaries are followed by the response of the authors.
9. McNeill describes his first exposure to the phenomenon while marching in unison with fellow recruits during World War II. I shall not treat the military aspect of "muscular bonding" here, but it should be apparent that we are dealing with a value-neutral process. The human emotional response associated with "muscular bonding" can lead to an aesthetically uplifting experience in a communal dance or to aggressive activities by an in-group intended to harm members of out-groups. Throughout history,

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group cohesion has proven to be a force for both good and evil. A number of years ago, the psychologists Stanley Schachter and Jerome Singer (1962) demonstrated that an undifferentiated physiological state of emotional arousal could be channeled in directions consistent with the surrounding social context.

10. Barrow reports the discovery of musical instruments—primitive flutes and drums—in Cro-Magnon settlements in Europe. These have been dated as 20,000–29,000 years old. It is not evident, however, that these predate the emergence of language.
11. McNeill takes note of the Church dances that were part of religious services at the end of the second century, but were eventually banned by St. Augustine, who feared their sexual aspects.
12. The theorists cited, though all sympathetic to a modular conceptualization of mind, nevertheless differ considerably over the sheer number of such modules, their innate or culturally acquired character, and the extent of interdependence between them. Mithen elaborates on these distinctions, but they are not of critical relevance for the major theme of the present essay.
13. A similar idea is advanced by Carey and Spelke 1994. In many respects, Mithen's ontogenetic model is reminiscent of an older tradition in developmental psychology, best represented by the writings of Heinz Werner (e.g., 1957). Werner's orthogenetic principle stated that development proceeded from an undifferentiated, global and diffuse stage to an intermediate stage of differentiation of parts, and finally to the integration of the differentiated parts.
14. In his recent review of Mithen's book, Howard Gardner (1997) argues that the general intelligence component of Mithen's model is a source of confusion, and should be abandoned in favor of a single transition from independent to interconnected modules.

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Jonathan H. Turner

THE EVOLUTION OF MORALITY

ABSTRACT: *The neurological rewiring of the mammalian brain to activate a broader array of emotions was the critical breakthrough in the development of not only moral systems, but other features often considered unique to humans, such as the capacity to use language and to think abstractly and rationally. Data from African apes and from ethnographies of hunter-gatherers provide the best clues as to the selection forces operating on the hominid line to produce an increasingly emotional and moral primate,* Homo sapiens.

How did the forces of evolution create animals who could organize their activities according to moral codes? This question has long fascinated social thinkers, and it is at the core of the recent, ongoing recoupling of biology with the social sciences. Early modern social theorists typically posited a view of human nature as either good or evil, and then argued that the concentration of power, or else the creation of a social contract, became necessary either to preserve what was good in their nature or to protect people from what is bad in it. To say the least, these were simplistic notions of how society was created, but have we really moved very much beyond them?

Today, for example, social science leans toward an instrumentalist answer to questions about the origins of morality, arguing that for a collectively produced joint good (such as civil peace) whose ab-

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sence would cause high negative externalities, it is rational for self-interested and utility-maximizing actors to generate moral codes that assure access to this valued good. The emergence of norms, as well as their enforcement through sanctions and systems of authority, are thus explained by assuming that people are primarily instrumental rationalists (e.g. Becker 1976; Hechter 1987; Coleman 1990; Turner 1992). Sociobiology has borrowed the mathematics of classical economics to produce a similar logic: the process of natural selection has produced "selfish genes" that drive an organism's behavior to preserve as much of its genotype in the gene pool as possible; if individual fitness is facilitated by membership in groups organized by moral codes, natural selection will generate the behavioral tendencies that foster and preserve such groups. For sociobiologists, the key mechanism behind morality-based social organization comes from Robert Trivers's (1971) notion of "reciprocal altruism," according to which it is (dare we say) "rational" for selfish genes to push their hosts to engage in reciprocal exchanges with non-kin in order to assure the survival of their genotype in the gene pool.

Both the instrumentalist and sociobiological explanations for why morality evolved have a certain plausibility, although they both suffer from what can be termed "explanation by story telling." Pick a trait, any trait, and one can construct a scenario for why it was rational or why it was fitness-enhancing for this trait to evolve. Such scenarios, especially those in sociobiology, usually contain a reconstruction of what happened in the distant—and, hence, unobservable—past, as evolution selected for traits that tended to reproduce themselves, in the form of surviving descendants who possessed them. Such scenarios thus tend to be *ex post facto* and *ad hoc*, and they can, if one chooses, be constructed *ad infinitum*.

Frans de Waal's *Good Natured: The Origins of Right and Wrong in Humans and Other Animals* (Harvard University Press, 1996) begins with the "paradox" that "genetic self-advancement at the expense of others—which is the basic thrust of evolution—has given rise to remarkable capacities for caring and sympathy" (5). This is only a paradox if one buys into sociobiology. Like all sociobiologists who have tried to explain what appear to be unselfish behaviors in terms of selfish genes, de Waal trots out the notion of reciprocal altruism, and constructs a scenario to explain how natural selection could have/must have produced seemingly unselfish behaviors among animals willing to incur the "costs" of helping nonrelatives who, at

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some point in the future, might reciprocate this altruism, thereby facilitating the survival of the seeming altruist. If de Waal only gave us a new version of reciprocal altruism to explain the evolution of morality in terms of selfish genes, his argument would be neither very interesting nor very novel. But de Waal keeps the notion of reciprocal altruism in the background, bringing it forward periodically but not making it the central point of the book.

De Waal's Basic Argument

De Waal frustrates the reader by throwing forth fascinating ideas and failing to pursue them; and by summarizing large literatures on primate behavior but failing to highlight the important differences among primates, particularly between monkeys and apes. Rather than being a sustained argument, the book is a set of interesting insights and vignettes roughly laced together by notions of reciprocal altruism and primate data. Let me briefly review the main line of argument, to the extent that there is one, as a background for my elaboration of de Waal's contribution.

At the back of the book, de Waal lists the "behavioral tendencies and characteristics" involved in morality. "Morality" means, for de Waal, *sympathy-related* traits, such as attachment, succorance, cognitive empathy, emotional contagion, and sympathy itself; *norm-related* characteristics such as prescriptive rules, the internalization of such rules, and the anticipation of punishment for rule violation; *reciprocity* traits, which revolve around giving and trading as well as vengeful and moralistic aggression against violators of reciprocity rules; and *getting-along* traits, such as peacemaking, the avoidance of conflict, a concern for one's community, accommodation among conflicting individual interests, and the maintenance of social relations. De Waal presents data, primarily from caged apes and monkeys, that he believes demonstrate that nonhuman primates have many of these characteristics, although none of them can integrate them in quite the same way human beings can. Natural selection has worked on the evolution of hominids (i.e., primates on the human evolutionary line) in ways that enable people to move beyond kin selection, extending reciprocal altruism to ever-larger groupings of conspecifics. Just how far morality can be extended depends on the available resources: the more resources available to a human popula-

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tion, the farther the reach of reciprocal altruism—from kin to group, to tribe, to nation, and perhaps to all of humanity.

How did natural selection work to produce the configuration of traits and characteristics that mark human moral systems? Here de Waal's argument gets fuzzy. One possibility is suggested early in the book: selection pressures for group organization increase when (1) the survival of each individual depends upon the viability of the group, (2) group organization depends upon mutual aid among individuals, and (3) the first and second factors create selection pressures for resolving internal conflicts. As far as it goes, this is a good answer, but how, exactly, did morality emerge from (1), (2), and (3)? We are never really given an answer, even an *ad hoc* scenario in terms of reciprocal altruism, but perhaps we are given something even more valuable: some useful leads for further study and development.

The most important lead, and the one I will pursue here, is the effect of natural selection on parent-offspring exchanges, gradually extending the neurology behind sympathy and empathy to ever more individuals and eventually to non-kin. As natural selection built upon what are really universal mother-offspring bonds in all mammals (stimulated by activity in the thalamo-cingulate division of the limbic system [Bentivoglio et al. 1993; Vogt 1993; Devinski and Luciano 1993]), certain cognitive and emotional capacities developed. On the cognitive side, natural selection generated neurological wiring for an organism capable of perceiving itself as distinct from its environment and fellow conspecifics. Natural selection also produced the capacity for role-taking, or the ability to put oneself in another's situation and perceive this other's intentions and likely courses of action (an idea that comes from George Herbert Mead, who is not cited by de Waal). Natural selection also rewired the brain so that organisms could create and perceive prescriptive rules (and the underlying system of dominance by which these rules are created and enforced). On the emotional side, natural selection reorganized the brains (and presumably the endocrine systems, although de Waal does not address either in any detail) of organisms to react emotionally to nonreciprocity, to experience shame for not performing reciprocally in the eyes of others, to feel guilt for failure to meet prescriptive rules and adhere to the underlying value premises on which such rules are built, and to experience fear of

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the consequences of violating rules—such as potential sanctions from others.

Most of *Good Natured* summarizes evidence from the literature on primates and other animals that bears on the argument above. De Waal creatively uses his extensive knowledge of primate research, and yet, there are several serious drawbacks in his analysis here, and by extension, in his other stimulating books (de Waal 1982 and 1989). The most fundamental flaw is that data on the behavior of monkeys and apes are continually mixed together, especially data bearing on dominance, hierarchy, and alliance formation. Yet monkeys and apes are separated by at least 20 million years of evolution—probably much more. In that period of time, important differences in the organizational structures and behavioral tendencies of monkeys and apes emerged, differences that are far greater than de Waal recognizes. Indeed, I would go so far as to argue that monkeys are too far removed from humans to provide useful data on the evolutionary forces producing moral systems, and that we should stop drawing inferences from monkeys about human nature. African apes are our best source of data, and by coupling such data with what we know about hunter-gatherers, a more focused picture of the survival strategies of hominids emerges.

The second problem is de Waal's practice of generalizing from caged animals. When apes are caged, they exhibit dominance, hierarchy, and alliance formation to a far greater extent than when they aren't. Even studies in natural habitats, such as Jane Goodall's (1986) long-term work in Gombe, distort chimpanzees' more natural behavioral tendencies by introducing food and other external incentives that figuratively become "cages." The distortions are much more severe when the cages are real.

De Waal notes these intensifying effects of caging, but does not really follow through on their implications. If caging creates unnatural behavior—that is, behavior that does not reflect the environment to which it was originally adaptive—then using caged apes to draw conclusions about primate behavior is very much like trying to understand human nature by looking at prison inmates. One will see hierarchy, prescriptive rules, powerful sanctions, coalition and alliance formation, and other features of human social organization; but do these spring from human nature or from imprisonment in surroundings quite unlike those in which we evolved? Ethnographies on the few hunter-gatherers who could be observed in their

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natural habitats demonstrate that natural human behavior tends to be short on dominance and long on individual autonomy, virtual equality, high rates of mobility, and fission in the face of conflict (see Maryanski and Turner 1992 and Turner 1997a). The behavior of human beings in the habitat in which they evolved is, in short, the exact opposite of their behavior in a prison.

De Waal recognizes that dominance has declined in the course of ape and human (hominoid) evolution, but his examples continually lump together monkeys, who are organized by dominance hierarchies and matrilines, and uncaged apes, among whom dominance is not very prominent and matrilines are unknown. De Waal thus portrays much more dominance, internal conflict, and alliance formation than is typical in African apes in their undisturbed habitats, let alone among hunter-gatherers. Hunter-gatherer bands are more likely to split up than fight when conflict arises. Moreover, the individualism, the high rates of mobility from group to group within a more inclusive community, and the fluidity in the group structures that characterize African apes in their natural habitat (Maryanski 1987; Maryanski and Turner 1992) are invisible to de Waal. De Waal's portrayals of apes are reminiscent, instead, of human beings in simple horticultural societies, which are marked by tension, conflict, alliance formation, and dominance regulated by the authority rules of the descent system (Turner 1997; Maryanski and Turner 1992). If we had evolved under horticultural conditions, then many of de Waal's depictions of human "nature" would be plausible. But hominids evolved as hunter-gatherers from a common ancestor that they once shared with extant species of apes; and if there is a nature built into human neurology and related biological systems, it is shaped by low population densities, small bands, frequent movement within territories, transfer of females to new bands upon marriage, fission in the face of conflict, infrequent coalition formation, no dominance hierarchies, and virtual equality (although somewhat grudging prestige is granted to those with special abilities).

So we must be cautious in making generalizations from animals that have been removed from their natural habitats. Even when caged apes are put back into larger foraging areas, these are generally not as large as their normal home ranges. Hence, data on caged apes do not provide a clear picture of these primates' basic behavioral propensities six million years ago. These data do, of course,

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offer very useful information on how apes adapt to restrictions on their home ranges, but such data are not what is required in speculating about the evolution of hominids.

These criticisms made, let me now pursue the most creative lead in *Good Natured* by recasting de Waal's argument into a series of questions: What is the nature of moral systems? How are they tied to the evolution of the emotional and cognitive capacities wired into the human brain? How did natural selection operate to create these capacities? And how can we use data on our closest living relatives, the African apes, to help answer these questions?

Human Individualism

Alexandra Maryanski (1992, 1993) has used cladistic analysis to try to discover the behavioral tendencies of the Last Common Ancestor (LCA) of human beings and contemporary apes. This common ancestor probably lived about five to six million years ago, and it is likely that behavioral characteristics common among the present-day apes most closely related to human beings were also present in the LCA of hominoids (i.e., apes and human beings) and that they were carried forward among hominids (i.e., direct ancestors on the human line). Maryanski discovered that unlike monkeys, apes exhibit mostly weak ties within local groupings, and considerable mobility from grouping to grouping within a larger regional community. (Caged apes have been removed from their regional communities, so their behavior no longer reflects that of their natural habitats.) Maryanski's review of the data forced the conclusion that the LCA was probably autonomous, individualistic, mobile, and bound by weak ties among adults; its only strong ties were probably between mothers and offspring. (Paternity could not be known, because the LCA, if it was like all extant apes except the gibbon, was sexually promiscuous). Thus, the social structures organizing the LCA were probably fluid and loose. This is true of present-day apes, too: females transfer out of the natal group at puberty, precluding the matrilines that are so important to the tight-knit organization of monkeys. (Even among the monogamous gibbon, adolescent females and males transfer from the natal group at puberty.)

Maryanski concluded that the history of primate evolution over the last 25 to 30 million years has revolved around divergence in

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the structures organizing apes and monkeys. While at one time monkeys and apes were very similar, monkeys became more successful in securing the core areas of the arboreal habitat (perhaps because of their more tight-knit group structures), whereas apes were increasingly pushed to the extremities of this habitat, where large group structures could not be sustained. Thus, monkeys became organized in terms of matrilines and dominance hierarchies, while apes moved toward organization based upon loose structures and social ties weakened by female and, for the most part, male transfer from natal groupings.

These behavioral traits are hard-wired in the neuroanatomy of apes, and as I will argue, in human beings as well—probably in what P. D. MacLean (1990, 1993a, and 1993b) has termed the *reptilian complex* or upper brain stem of all mammals—the *diencephalon*, where species-specific behavioral routines are activated. These behavioral routines are driven by the neuronets in the oldest part of the brain; they are both primal and primary, in the sense that they forced the subsequent evolution of the brain to accommodate them.

The real paradox of hominid evolution is this: How could an animal with propensities for low sociality, weak ties, autonomy, loose social structures, and all the other characteristics still evident in our closest ape cousins become better organized when faced with having to survive on the African savanna? As the forest retreated during the late Miocene and early Pliocene (five to ten million years ago), some species of apes had to leave the safety of trees and begin to forage on the expanding savannas. Most did not make it, as the long decline in the number of ape species over the last five million years will attest (we are now down to only four species of apes—five if we include *Homo sapiens sapiens*—indicating that apes are, when compared to the many species of monkeys, a great evolutionary failure).

As de Waal emphasizes, organization into groups has advantages, particularly on the predator-ridden African savanna. The problem for hominids was how to organize groups when primal and primary centers of the brain push behavior toward loose and weak ties, mobility, and individual autonomy. How did natural selection overcome this problem? The answer is, I believe, the expansion of hominid emotional capacities, which, in turn, led, over the last three million years, to the development of morality in the sense

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proposed by de Waal. But in trying to indicate how natural selection operated to produce these emotionally driven moral capacities, I wish to be much more specific and detailed than de Waal about what occurred.

The Evolution of the Brain

Evolution is a conservative process, building upon the materials natural selection is given to work on. In MacLean's controversial tripartite division of the brain, for example, the reptilian brain is the neuroanatomical base that mammals once shared with reptiles and perhaps birds as well. Today, this upper portion of the human brain stem is termed the *diencephalon.* Rather than abandoning this old core, natural selection added layers of cells over it, creating what MacLean terms the *paleomammalian brain* (where the older centers of emotion reside in all mammals). Finally, evolution selected for creatures with additional cells, nuclei, and layers of cortex laid over the paleomammalian brain to create the *neocortex,* where sensory information is received, processed, and integrated; and where rational, abstract, and reflective thought occurs.

The relative size of the neocortex gets most of the press in stories about differences among mammals, but equally important for the origins of morality is reorganization of the cells within and among the neocortical, paleomammalian, and reptilian portions of the brain. This reorganization created complex capacities for the production of emotion and, following MacLean, is often termed the limbic system. However, in deference to MacLean's critics (e.g., Le Doux 1991, 1993, and 1996), we should allow that while the core of emotional responses among mammals is in the paleomammalian brain, these core areas have been reorganized and reintegrated with the diencephalon and neocortex in humans, thereby making the limbic system less coherent and bounded than implied in MacLean's tripartite conception of the brain.

The older centers of the limbic system in the paleomammalian brain contain the amygdala or amygdalar division, where feelings of self-preservation, anger, rage, self-defense, pain, and fear are activated; the septum or septal division, where procreative and sexual behaviors (e.g., grooming, pleasure, courtship, and pleasure reactions) are activated; and the archicortex, encompassing the hip-

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pocampus, where emotional tags and markers for storing cognitions in memory are activated. Among mammals, these older centers became rewired to each other and, even more importantly, to both the reptilian brain and the neocortex (De Groot 1991). An important part of this rewiring in all mammals is the elaboration of the *cingulate gyrus*, a layer of distinctive neocortical tissue that wraps around the paleomammalian portion of the brain, activating those behaviors that are distinctive to mammals, such as nursing and maternal care, audiovocal communication from mother to offspring (dramatically evident in the "separation cry"), and playfulness (Turner 1996a; for more details, see Devinski and Luciano 1993).

Thus, in forging the hominid line, natural selection worked on ape anatomy and, within the neurological portion of this anatomy, it reorganized the limbic system. De Waal would agree, I believe, that the capacity for morality is ultimately based upon a species' emotional wiring as much as on its cognitive abilities. Thus, it is important to understand how natural selection reorganized the basic mammalian brain's architecture so that hominids could be emotional in ways that led to the development of moral systems.

The Natural Selection of Morality

An aboreal ape would bring to the predator-ridden African savanna of some six million years ago stereoscopic vision as the dominant sense modality; a primate skeleton; strong and dexterous hands and wrists; the ability to brachiate; and comparatively high intelligence. The hominid line would be the result. Selection produced an animal with an upright stance to see predators—an especially important adaptation for a vision-dominated primate whose olfactory sense is rather limited when compared to other mammals. But the real challenge was to increase social organization for the purposes enumerated by de Waal: defense, mutual aid, and the coordination of hunting and gathering. How was this to occur in a primate whose basic behavioral routines emphasized weak ties and low group solidarity? How would at least 20 million years of evolution *away* from tight-knit group structures depending on authority, alliance formation, matrilines, and dominance be reversed by what must have been intense selection pressures?

As R. A. Fisher (1930) noted long ago, large mutations are gener-

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ally maladaptive, and large mutations changing primal areas of the upper brain stem—the thalamus, hypothalamus, and related structures—would almost always be maladaptive. To produce successful neuroanatomical changes, therefore, nature must have rewarded small hominid mutations (and patterns of genetic drift) that intensified emotional bonds. The scenario hypothesized by de Waal would have built on the mother-infant bond, as activated in the cingulate gyrus. The extension of the cingulate gyrus into a complex of connections in the upper brain stem, septum, amygdalar, hippocampus, and neocortex would have been one way for natural selection to elaborate mother-infant bonds into ties with non-kin. Reciprocal altruism among hominids may well have been the result, overcoming the weak-tie, loose-structure legacy of all apes except the monogamous gibbon, which is very far off the human line.

But much more was involved. Selection would need to rewire the neocortex to do something that extant apes cannot do: gain control over displays of emotion. A noisy, emotional primate on the savanna would scare off prey and attract predators, giving it little chance to pass on its genes. The extensive pathways from the neocortex to limbic and diencephalon areas seem to allow the requisite control over emotion. Once this control could be exerted, selection could further refine the cognitive and emotional capacities listed by de Waal as the basis of morality.

The cognitive and emotional basis of morality is related to an obvious but often underappreciated feature of all primates: the dominance of the visual sense. Most mammals are olfactory dominant, but selection in the arboreal habitat made vision the dominant sense among primates. The problem of how to integrate the other senses under visual dominance creates new selection pressures for rewiring the brain so that subordinate haptic, auditory and, eventually, olfactory inputs are coordinated with, and subordinated to, vision (although smell is still wired directly into the paleomammalian brain). Without this integration, sensory information would be conflicting and confusing (Maryanski and Turner 1992). Norman Geschwind (1965a and 1965b) originated the insight that the rewiring of the primate brain for cross-modal associations (e.g., vision-touch, hearing-seeing, auditory-touch) constituted a preadaptation for language, given further selection pressure for language use. These associations occur primarily in the inferior parietal lobe, close to where the major centers for language comprehension

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(Wernicke's area) and speech production (Broca's area) were eventually to evolve, perhaps as early as *Homo erectus*.

As Geschwind noted, language is more than mere speech production; it is a cognitive ability and, as Maryanski has stressed, it is a cognitive ability made possible by the integration of the senses (Maryanski and Turner 1992). Much of the human ability to play roles and read underlying emotions originates in areas connected to the centers for speech comprehension. I suspect that the hominid brain forged connections between emotion and cognitive processes prior to the evolution of language. Language was, I believe, built upon already existing emotional structures of the brain, not vice versa; this is why the visual reading of gestures and the emotions they reveal is far more important in role taking than is speech production and comprehension.

"Body language" is another obvious yet underappreciated piece of the puzzle, since it is essential to role taking and imputing others' intentions, which, as de Waal emphasizes, are the cognitive cornerstones of morality. Higher primates can read and interpret the intentions behind body language (posturing with limbs, tail, head, chest, and hips) and facial displays, providing another clue as to how early hominids began to form stronger bonds and higher levels of group solidarity. Environmental pressures selected for animals that could utilize a dramatically expanded array of emotions to increase social solidarity in the face of more primal tendencies for weak ties and individual autonomy. The rather *ad hoc* and scattered way that the brain has been rewired for this capacity indicates that selection was not only working on what it was given, but also working very rapidly to get the necessary circuitry in place. Morality ultimately resides in this circuitry, but we need to specify in more detail how natural selection went beyond the characteristics of contemporary apes to convert our Last Common Ancestor into a uniquely moral species.

The Priority of Morality over Language

The potential for language emerged as a byproduct of integration among the senses of a visually dominant mammal that had to rely on sight in order to survive. The arboreal habitat selected for a generalized anatomy and visual system for reading body language. And

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selection rewired the brain so that savanna-dwelling apes could gain cortical control over the emotions activated by the limbic system. None of these selection processes directly increased either the cognitive or emotional capacities for morality; they were preadaptations with fitness-enhancing value for reasons having little to do with language, cognition, or emotionally laden moral codes. It was probably only with *Homo habalis* some 2.5 million years ago, and certainly with *Homo erectus* some 800,000 years later, that selection pressures worked on these preadaptations to begin the process of creating a moral species.

The increase in brain size from *Australopithecenes* to *Homo habalis*, and then to *Homo erectus*, is often interpreted as a sign that human-like capacities for language were being selected. While this is certainly a plausible scenario, language may instead have been a later development, such that the early increases in hominid brain size had little to do with language per se, and much more to do with enhancing the cognitive-emotional abilities necessary for solidarity among members of a weak-tie species trying to survive on the African savanna. If one wants to portray these events in terms of the rise of reciprocal altruism, then this period of hominid evolution is probably when the human line began to extend reciprocity—although from my point of view the notion of reciprocal altruism is too vague to explain what is unique to morality.

What were the direct and specific selection pressures working on the prelinguistic preadaptations discussed in the previous section? My answer is that all of these pressures revolved around enhancing interrelated cognitive-emotional abilities for: (1) mobilizing emotional energy, (2) achieving interpersonal attunement, (3) allowing interpersonal sanctioning, (4) enabling moral coding, (5) engaging in exchanges of value, and (6) enabling decision making. Let me briefly examine these abilities and indicate how they made hominids and, eventually, humans moral creatures.

1. *Mobilizing emotional energy.* All primates can mobilize emotional energy, but not all of them do so with the breadth, spectrum, subtlety, and depth used to forge flexible social bonds among a low-sociality primate. Even after several million years of evolution, we must still use rituals, or stereotyped sequences of gestures, not only to arouse emotions but also to keep interactions emotionally on track; so mobilization of a broader array of emotions *alone* was not,

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and is not, sufficient to overcome our propensities for weak ties and individual autonomy.

2. *Interpersonal attunement.* In primates, and particularly among humans, role taking is primarily a visual process and, correspondingly, so is the presentation of self. Since vision is our dominant sense, this is not surprising, but it is nonetheless fundamental to understanding the evolution of morality. The ability to play roles, to engage in presentations of self, certainly preceded the ability to use language; even today, the reading of nonverbal gestures is a more rapid and effective way to assess the emotions and intentions of others. The reason for this is that hearing is sequential and, hence, very slow; in contrast, sight registers configurations and patterns, thereby integrating a great deal more information simultaneously. I would add the following speculation to these facts: our way of thinking is structured by visual dominance; and the chemistry and wiring of the brain produces gestalts and patterns of information (Turner 1996a, 1996b, 1995). Thinking is not internalized speech. If it were, we would be slow and dimwitted, and we would not need a translation box—that is, Broca's area—to convert into sequential, verbal form the brain's way of thinking in terms of fields and patterns. Conversely, Wernicke's area translates sequentially given language into sight-like patterns, configurations, and gestalts. Most interpersonal attunement does not occur through the auditory channel. Although inflections and rhythms of speech can give us additional information, this is only by communicating the underlying emotional content of speech. Visually reading the information coming from face and body is much more important, because this information is read rapidly, is perceived as a pattern or gestalt, and is able to bypass the slower auditory channel (Wernicke's area) and more directly plug into the vision-based way that the brain thinks (Turner 1988, 1989, 1995, 1996a, 1996b).

Thus, if there were pressure from selection to increase the intensity of social bonds, it would likely work by expanding human capacities to exhibit and read temperament. Even more speculatively, could the loss of facial and body hair have been an adaptation that increased the body area capable of expressing emotion? It is known that a great deal of emotion is read by observing the subtle effects of blood and other substances moving at different rates through the circulatory system, e.g., when we blush. I think de Waal would agree that an animal cannot be moral unless it can visually receive

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fine-tuned messages about mood, feeling, and intent. The more subtle the capacity to read emotions, the more complex and powerful morality will be.

3. Sanctioning. Social bonds cannot be sustained without sanctions for transgressions, and particularly so for a low-sociality ape like humans. But without emotions, sanctions have no teeth; the effectiveness of sanctioning is tied to their ability to arouse emotions. Moreover, the subtle and complex forms of sanctioning on which moral systems depend must be able to evoke a range of feelings much broader than the primal emotions of anger, fear, and satisfaction/happiness. A moral system is built upon such reactions as shame, guilt, anxiety, panic, surprise, ecstasy, wonder, gratitude, and the even subtler emotions that we can readily feel when sanctioned. Sanctioning as a means of social control thus would have been a selection pressure for the expansion of hominid emotional capacities.

At this point, it is important to emphasize something de Waal virtually ignores: sanctions can be negative (for inappropriate behavior) or positive (for appropriate behavior). A moral system is built upon both. Indeed, positive sanctions are probably far more important than negative ones. The latter, which stem from anger on the part of the offended individual and fear on the part of the offender, may generate such destructive reactions as fright, flight, and resentment. Moreover, because negative sanctions tap into older and more primal areas of the limbic system (the septal and amygdalar divisions), they are far more disruptive to emotional well-being (although mild negative sanctions producing moderate forms of fear, such as anxiety and apprehensiveness, and softer variants of anger, such as disappointment, can be very effective in sustaining social order). In contrast, positive sanctions, based on such bonding emotions as the satisfaction or happiness of both their donors and their recipients, are more conducive to both social solidarity and emotional well-being.

De Waal notes that moral systems are maintained by the arousal of shame and guilt in response to rule violations and other interpersonal transgressions, but he does not fully appreciate the complexity of these emotions. Shame is constructed from three more primary emotions: disappointment and anger with oneself seasoned with fear about the consequences of having performed inadequately in others' eyes. Guilt similarly combines disappointment with oneself, fear about the consequences of violating a rule, and a

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dollop of anger at oneself for having done so. Shame and guilt are thus built primarily from negative emotions; and while they are very effective in maintaining control, they also lead to the use of defense mechanisms that produce hate, vengeance, worry, panic, envy, jealousy, rage, fury, and other volatile mixes of fear and anger (see Kemper 1987 and Turner 1996a and 1996b). Morality cannot be built from these primordial emotions alone; it must also rest in part on such variants of satisfaction as happiness, contentment, affection, love, and other socially bonding emotions. These can mix with a tinge of fear, for example, to create pride, gratitude, hope, relief, and wonder. Similarly, awe is fear mitigated by happiness; and to snub another manifests anger but brings satisfaction.

If sanctions are to be effective enforcers of a moral system, they cannot be solely negative and their emotional basis cannot be fear and anger alone. Any moral system must be based largely upon the bond-forming powers of satisfaction or happiness, even if mixed with fear and anger. In a low-sociality primate whose basic behavioral tendencies are autonomy, weak ties, and mobility, a reliance on only negative sanctions would have produced either movement away from the source of the sanction or retaliatory actions like those of caged primates. Humans (and I suspect, our hominid ancestors as well) possess a well-developed thalamo-cingulate division because it was necessary to build social ties on a foundation of positive sanctioning and happiness, especially if sanctions were not to be merely responses to situational points of anger and fear, but were to support a more enduring set of norms.

4. *Moral coding.* As with sanctions, those expectations for proper conduct that are laden with emotional content are the most likely to be followed. This explains why natural selection not only favored a large neocortex, which can grasp and elaborate a larger array of moral codes and information about how and when they are to be used in diverse social contexts; but also favored a limbic system that connects cognitive understandings of conduct with the emotions that would give these understandings a "moral" dimension. Without emotions, codes of conduct are like dry instruction manuals; they have no compelling force, especially for a primate whose reptilian brain contains propensities for weak ties and low sociality.

De Waal does not make the critical distinction between *pros*criptive and *pre*scriptive moral codes. He emphasizes prescriptive rules

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(about how matters are to be carried out), but ignores proscriptive codes (about what is *not* to be done). It is true that day-to-day morality revolves less around prohibitions than prescriptions, backed by mild positive and negative sanctions. Still, rules enforced by moral systems must also contain at least some proscriptive rules enforced by more intense positive and negative sanctions.

Prescriptive codes backed by positive sanctions form bonds, whereas prescriptive codes accompanied by negative sanctions will sustain conformity but arouse complicated emotional mixes of fear and anger leading to guilt and shame—a very effective moral force in mild doses, but highly disruptive to solidarity if relied upon heavily. Thus, if selection processes were working to increase bonds among low-sociality individuals, they would tend to favor a high ratio of prescriptive over proscriptive codes. Proscriptive codes would thus be relatively few and would preclude activities that could disrupt bond formation and solidarity, while being enforced by very strong negative sanctions. But the predominance of prescriptive over proscriptive codes would overwhelmingly favor positive sanctioning; and perhaps it is for this reason that the thalamocingulate division wraps around the older centers of fear and anger, connecting the neocortex to the reptilian brain (Turner 1996a and 1997b). This would help control fear and anger, emphasize the satisfaction/happiness that flows from the unique behaviors activated by the cingulate gyrus (such as mother-infant bonding and playfulness), and use these emotions both to mitigate the fear and anger prompted by the older primal centers of the paleomammalian brain and to overcome the behavioral routines for weak ties and autonomy activated in the reptilian brain.

5. *Exchanging value.* For a thing or an act to have "value" in the sense of the capacity to bestow gratification or pain, it must stimulate emotions. Fear, anger, and satisfaction/happiness are primary emotions of all mammals, but human beings can generate many variants and combinations of them (see Kemper 1987 and Turner 1996a and 1997b). The process of expanding the neocortex and rewiring the limbic system to increase the range and variety of emotions that hominids and, eventually, human beings could experience would also have expanded the range of behaviors that could bestow gratification or pain. One reason for this expansion was that the ability to experience gratification from a large range of emotions would have allowed for the formation of more flexible bonds

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in a low-sociality mammal. By exchanging value in interaction, bonds of reciprocity could develop; and by enabling a wider range of emotions to bestow value than in other mammals, exchanges of value could be not only diverse, but could also be extended to non-kin as long as value-giving resources were involved.

Reciprocal altruism is not a viable adaptive strategy without an expanded range of emotions that can confer value on exchanges of resources, especially when their receipt cannot be certain or immediate. To assure reciprocity under these conditions, it is useful to have additional sources of value, tied to emotions, that can be immediately traded (such as "gratitude" for a favor or "relief" that someone has come through in a crisis). Reciprocity requires many levels of value that can be exchanged—some immediate, others delayed, and many indirect. This layering of value could not occur without a corresponding expansion of the range of emotions an animal can experience. Thus, natural selection would have favored ever-greater capacities for reciprocity among low-sociality apes; and this pressure would be capable of producing the neurological changes that I enumerated earlier.

6. Decision making. Human cognition revolves around the capacity to weigh alternatives, anticipate their outcome, and select a line of conduct that leads to valued alternatives. As Antonio Damasio (1994) has argued, human "intelligence" presupposes the ability to evaluate ends, which means assigning emotional valences to them. The more flexible and complex the decision-making, then, the more extensive and diverse must be the emotional evaluations that accompany deliberation.

Morality is about making decisions—the right ones. To "be moral," one must be able to know moral rules, both prescriptive and proscriptive; understand the potential consequences of an action for arousing both positive and negative sanctions; and decide to behave in ways that follow the rules and trigger positive sanctions. Without emotions to tag cognitions about what to do in a particular context, morality could not exist. To the degree that a low-sociality primate, trying to secure the advantages of group organization, could make moral decisions, it would increase its ability to sustain group structures, especially the flexible and fluid ones evident in hunter-gatherer modes of organization.

To reach that stage of development, a certain level of cognitive and emotional "infrastructure" must have been in place. Some of

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this would have come from the preadaptations discussed earlier, but once a certain level of cognitive-emotional rewiring produced better decision-makers, this infrastructure itself could be the subject of further selection. Natural selection would have favored a more intelligent decision-maker, especially one who could make moral decisions that promoted social solidarity. The sudden increase in the size of the brain of *Homo habalis* and of subsequent hominids reflects not just sheer expansion of neocortex, but also an elaboration of the limbic system in ways that enabled the expanded neocortex to use its newfound intellectual powers.

* * *

In sum, then, moral systems emerged in hominids and reached their current level through the working of natural selection on the anatomy and neuroanatomy of a low-sociality primate faced with intense pressures to organize. The notion of reciprocal altruism simply does not capture, except in a very rough denotative sense, the evolution of hominid moral capacities. The basic mammalian brain was not only expanded, but also rewired to increase the emotional capacities of late hominids, probably *Homo habalis* and certainly *Homo erectus*. The necessary preadaptations of savanna-dwelling apes were for cross-modal sensory association given visual dominance, an upright stance, the control of emotions, and the use of "body language" as a means of visually communicating intentions. The dramatic decline in the number of species of apes, particularly when compared to the success of monkeys, shows that apes were rapidly being selected out of the primate order. Hominid evolution involved a lucky solution to the dilemma face by low-sociality apes forced to organize socially; and it proved to be one that, once started, evolved into the capacity we know as morality.

I have emphasized the neurology of emotions in a gross architectural sense, but obviously emotions are affected by endocrine-system processes stimulated by the brain. As natural selection expanded and rewired the neurology of hominids, it was also making the corresponding alterations in the endocrine system. The consequence of these selection processes was to produce an animal capable of complex emotional arousal, which could evolve into morally directed action. The direct selection pressures pushing this process along were, I believe, connected to the fitness-enhancing effects of being able to mobilize combinations and variants of fear, anger, and

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satisfaction/happiness, use this mobilization for more fine-grained interpersonal attunement, construct emotionally laden systems of rules, sanction conformity to these rules both positively and negatively, enhance what was valued by more complicated and layered sets of emotional reinforcers, and increase the sophistication and complexity of decisions by tagging alternatives with a greater range of emotional valences. These selection pressures all fed into one another to produce a moral animal; and once this adaptive strategy was hit upon by natural selection, it worked to overcome the disadvantages of a low-sociality ape trying to survive on the African savanna. Indeed, it created an evolved ape capable of constructing huge societies and, relatedly, able to kill off many other life forms, including its primate cousins.

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A. R. Maryanski

THE ORIGIN OF SPEECH AND ITS IMPLICATION FOR THE OPTIMAL SIZE OF HUMAN GROUPS

ABSTRACT: *In* Grooming, Gossip and the Evolution of Language, *Robin Dunbar argues that speech developed from primate vocalizations as a replacement for grooming. Dunbar convincingly shows that language is just a highly developed form of primate communication. But Dunbar's thesis about the relationship between speech and optimal group size is problematic: his focus on strong ties leads him to overlook the integrative force of weak-tie networks.*

The ability to name and associate something with an arbitrary symbol is not language proper, but it may be its first (and most difficult) step. How each of us takes this step is fascinating enough; what fires the imagination of scholars is the question of how our species first came to take it.

In *Grooming, Gossip and the Evolution of Language* (London: Faber and Faber, 1996), Robin Dunbar pursues this question armed with a bold new theory. In the view of this distinguished primatologist, speech evolved to pinch-hit for primates' practice of grooming each other by picking, combing, and otherwise arranging each other's hair. Dunbar surmises that primate societies are held to-

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gether by grooming, which serves to establish and preserve social relationships. Dunbar also finds a positive statistical association between primate brain size and mean group size, inferring that the reason monkeys and apes are so brainy (when compared to other mammals) is that their complex, year-round living arrangements mandate high-powered cognitive skills, especially for the management of interpersonal relationships in coalitions. Dunbar concludes that the higher the degree of cognitive computing power for any *nonhuman* primate species, the larger its average group size, with a ceiling of 55 individuals; and that the more group size exceeds this limit, the less likely it is that grooming will continue to promote social cohesion. As individuals struggle to maintain increasing numbers of social relationships they will experience cognitive overload. The end result is social breakdown and dispersion.

What does the size of *human* groups have to do with language? The answer follows from Dunbar's estimate that the human neocortex is 30 percent larger than that of other primates. When this ratio is plugged into Dunbar's equations, an optimal group size of 150 human beings is predicted, a figure that Dunbar says is consistent with the hunting and gathering societies to which human beings are ideally suited by evolution. If there is a linear relationship between group size and grooming time, however, then, in the absence of language, our hunter-gatherer ancestors would have had to devote 40 percent of their day to mutual grooming exchanges, leaving little time for foraging, sleeping, and other activities. Given this handicap, Dunbar argues, speech developed from primate vocalizations in order to replace grooming when the size of human populations began to drift upward among early foraging populations. Speech started out as a form of "vocal grooming to allow us to bond larger groups than was possible using the conventional primate mechanism of physical grooming"(78).

How large a group can speech knit together? The hunter-gatherer group size of 150 is still the optimal human limit, Dunbar says, which would appear to present a problem for industrialized societies. How are modern societies integrated? How are we able to escape cognitive overload? Dunbar's answer is that the "human brain cannot sustain more than a certain number of relationships." This cutoff is why, "even in large-scale societies, the extent of our social networks is not much greater than that typical of the hunter-gatherers' world. . . . Psychologically speaking, we are Pleistocene

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hunter-gatherers locked into a twentieth-century political economy" (77).

An intriguing hypothesis. But is it true? Did speech evolve from primate calls as a replacement for grooming? Do primates use grooming for group cohesion? Can we have social relationships among more than 150 people? Before taking up these themes, it might be helpful to put Dunbar's theory of speech origins into broader perspective.

Dunbar's Continuity Hypothesis

> The one great barrier between the brute and man is language. Language is our Rubicon and no brute will dare to cross it.
>
> —Max Muller, *Lectures on the Science of Language*

The origin of speech is an old philosophical issue. Speculation began with religious interpretations that centered on the speech habits of Adam and Eve as they chatted away in paradise. Biblical speculation was succeeded by utilitarian theories that focused on natural phenomena, such as environmental sounds that could serve as the model for speech; or babbling babies, whose cooing ultimately turned into meaningful sounds with the help of mothers' selective reinforcement. By the nineteenth century, utilitarian theories were replaced by evolutionary ones; scholars sought clues about the origin of speech by reconstructing and comparing past languages and by searching for the most primitive languages.[1] These pursuits failed, because all comparisons led only to complex mother languages; and because all aboriginals, no matter how simple their culture, were found to speak complete and "modern" tongues (for a detailed bibliography on glottogenesis, see Hewes 1975 and 1977).

Today, evolutionary theories of speech can be divided into a continuity camp and a discontinuity camp. The continuity camp argues that language, when viewed in symbolic or neurobiological terms, is not unique to humans. The discontinuity camp disagrees (see Pinker and Bloom 1990). Continuity theorists point to the linguistic properties of primate communication systems, to shared primate neurological properties, and to the sign-language capacities of apes. Discontinuity theorists challenge these notions and even dismiss the idea that language is primarily a social skill instrumental to com-

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munication. Instead, many adhere to Noam Chomsky's view that language is a technical skill encompassing a formal set of grammatical rules. In Chomsky's scheme (1972), only human children are born with a "linguistic acquisition device," which gives a child "wired-in-knowledge" to learn the rules of any language. These preprogrammed stages are unique to human beings, according to discontinuity theorists—whether language is conceptualized as a series of universal rules or as a modular program. Continuity theorists, on the other hand, while acknowledging that only humans have a "full-blown" capacity for language, maintain that linguistic communication crosses species lines.

Dunbar argues that speech must have linguistic precursors in primates if it evolved to replace grooming as a more efficient social tool. He lays the groundwork for his version of continuity with two impressive data sets on ape language experiments and on monkey vocal calls.

"Talking ape" experiments initiated ape language studies, but researchers soon realized that apes could not easily make voluntary sounds because their vocal-auditory channel is not under cortical control.[2] "Signing ape" experiments, however, hit the jackpot; apes (and monkeys) do have cortical control over their visual and haptic (i.e., touch) senses. Today, there is a large literature on how signs and artificial devices (e.g., computer buttons) enable apes to learn simple rules of grammar and to acquire large vocabularies of arbitrary symbols that they can use to denote objects, actions, and relationships (for discussions see Gardner, Gardner and Canfort 1989; Rumbaugh and Pate 1984). Recently, a bonobo chimp by the name of Kanzi rocked the scholarly world with his ability to understand spoken English. Kanzi cannot speak because his vocal channel is under affective (limbic) control. But his auditory cortex for speech perception is under cortical control, making possible the comprehension of words and simple sentences (Savage-Rumbaugh et al. 1993; Rambaugh and Savage-Rumbaugh 1996).

While Dunbar praises Kanzi's achievements, calling him "the Einstein and Shakespeare of the chimpanzee world rolled into one," he is quick to add that unfortunately no ape "has progressed convincingly beyond the simple two- and three-word sentences typical of two-year-old human children" (53). For Dunbar, "chimps may, at best, have a foot on the language ladder but it is not all that we might have expected of an ape standing on the very threshold of

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humanity" (54). Dunbar adds that chimp "conversational skills" are "stilted and laboured" when compared to the "fluent witterings of the gelada [monkey's] contact calling" (54).

Dunbar's continuity theory is more in tune with the chatter of monkeys than with the language of apes. "Contact calls" are frequent within monkey groups and "spacing calls" are used for communication with nearby groups. In some species, young monkeys can even adjust their vocalizations depending upon whether their assailant is a relative or a low-status or dominant acquaintance (Preuschoft and Preuschoft 1994). While it remains true that most auditory exchanges are controlled by the limbic system of the brain, some vocalizations are referential or voluntary calls. Vervets, macaques, baboons, and gelada monkeys have vocalizations with encoded semantic qualities, giving them the flexibility to distinguish between predators and nonpredators. For example, vervets use a bird-of-prey call to inform conspecifics to hide outside of the canopy, a leopard alarm call to tell them to flee to the top of the canopy, and a snake call to warn them to stay out of thickets; and while these calls are obviously laden with emotion, they are also laced with denotative, cognitive components (see Steklis 1988; Preuschoft and Preuschoft 1994; Cheney and Seyfarth 1990; Marler and Evans 1997). As Dunbar writes,

> we can already see many hallmarks of human speech in the Old World monkeys. In the vervet's calls we have an archetypal proto-language. Quite arbitrary sounds are used to refer to specific objects, to convey information about who is doing what (or about to do what). In addition, these calls can be overlaid with varying degrees of emotional overtone, much as our own verbal statements are. There is no need for a gestural phase. It can all be done by voice. It seems but a small step from here to formalizing sound patterns so that they can carry more information. And from there to producing language is but another small step. All this suggests that the evolution of the capacity for language was the result of the gradual coming together of several originally unrelated anatomical and neurological components over a long period of time. (142)

Is Dunbar's "vocal-auditory" theory credible? Before answering this question, let me mention that oral and visual languages are equally complete; the key difference is that one relies upon a linear, auditory code for transmission, while the other employs a vi-

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sual-gestural code (Poizner, Bellugi, and Klima 1990). Dunbar rejects the idea that our ancestors passed through a visual-gestural stage, a theory held by some continuity theorists (e.g., Hewes 1973). Instead, he links speech with monkey vocalizations, a thesis entertained by earlier continuity theorists, who proposed that language ultimately evolved from graded or blended calls, or even from the baboon grunting calls that resemble human vowels in structure and resonance (see Marler 1965; Hockett 1960; Andrew 1976). Dunbar's thesis is therefore not new, but he has upped the ante by concluding that an "archetypal proto-language" is *already* present in the vocalizations of some monkey species, and that "the machinery to produce the sounds of human speech was in place long before humans were even a twinkle in the eye of evolution" (141).

A point in Dunbar's favor is that the vocal tracts of human beings, apes, and monkeys all work in the same way and share a common morphology. Like other primates, we vocalize by maneuvering air, lip movements, and vibrations of our vocal cords (Bastian 1965). Thus, the grunt of a baboon or the hoot of a chimpanzee is, at a gross functional level, produced the same way as the speech of a human. The crucial difference is that neither monkeys nor apes can produce the variety of sounds that we can, nor are they able to generate them as rapidly. This means that before human speech could emerge, natural selection had to produce major changes in the tongue, larynx, pharynx, and other vocal structures, which would allow for our distinct patterns of phonation. These selection pressures must have been intense, since changes in our vocal tract increased its susceptibility to blockage.

For his argument to work, Dunbar's future research must show how a primate vocal-auditory system with a limited repertoire of discrete calls could gradually become a productive phonemic-based system. He also needs to provide an explanation for why the vocalizations of our closest cousins—chimpanzees, gorillas, and orangutans—are so poorly developed when compared to those of monkeys. At least 25 million years and many physical, biochemical, and cognitive differences separate Old World monkeys from hominoids—which includes both apes and humans. Conversely, chimp and human DNA differ by only 1.1 percent, and both hominoids find their origin in the same animal, only 5 million years ago (McGrew 1992; Goodman et al. 1990; Begun 1992). Why, then,

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should we be more similar to monkeys than hominoids? Finally, Dunbar needs to connect his theory to equally crucial neurological changes, which allow apes (but not monkeys) to use sign language, albeit in rudimentary form.

Speech and the Problem of Community

> Among sundry of the primates gregariousness is joined with some subordination, some combination, some display of the social sentiments.
>
> —Herbert Spencer, *Principles of Sociology*

Even though it has potential problems, Dunbar's "vocal-auditory" thesis is plausible. But his hypothesis that speech evolved to replace grooming when early humans needed a more powerful tool for cohesion is far less persuasive.

Does grooming serve to promote social solidarity? The lifeways of primates are far from understood, but of the 188 species making up the primate order, most live together with conspecifics all year long. For animals who are highly intelligent, slow to mature, and long lived, this requires the integration of not just the adult males and females but infants, juveniles, and adolescents as well (Hinde 1986). In the world of primates, mothers groom their young, adult primates often remain in lifetime grooming relationships, unacquainted adults rarely groom, and, for some species, adult grooming is rare.

The consensus on grooming is that it helps break down social barriers to reproduction, prevents the buildup of parasites on primate skin, serves as an appeasement gesture, forestalls aggression, reduces tension, and cements social relationships. We also know that grooming varies with the time of day, the temperature, and the amount and dispersal of resources, and that there is less grooming when a population swells beyond its modal size (Goosen 1980 and 1991; Chance 1963; Seyforth 1977; Rhine and Maryanski 1996; Drickamer 1976). Thus, a hefty literature buttresses Dunbar's claim that grooming serves to initiate and reinforce primate social relationships. What does this say about the issue of group size?

In a sample of more than two dozen Old World higher primates, Dunbar finds a strong correlation between primate neocortical size

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and mean group size. On the strength of this association, Dunbar proposes a species-specific modal group size that is largely fixed by cognitive processing capacity, with group size a function of the absolute number of social relationships that each member can personally keep track of and maintain. When group size increases beyond this point, the social obligations of each member become so great that they trigger cognitive overload and a breakdown in group solidarity. By using neocortical volume to predict the size of early human populations in reverse, Dunbar calculates an upper limit of 150 individuals, which is compatible with the size of hunter-gatherer groups. But if our food-collecting ancestors had relied upon grooming for social cohesion, they would have had to spend nearly half of their day maintaining interpersonal relationships. Thus, speech evolved to replace grooming in maintaining social cohesion.

Why speech? Dunbar suggests that it allows an individual to socialize with several others simultaneously. Without question, Dunbar writes, "language evolved to facilitate the bonding of social groups, and . . . it mainly achieves this aim by permitting the exchange of socially relevant information" (123). Dunbar argues that if speech evolved to increase our capacity for social bonding from the primate limit of 55 to the hunter-gatherer limit of 150, human conversation groups should be proportionately larger than conventional primate grooming cliques, and human conversations should be largely devoted to the exchange of social information rather than information about the natural world.

Dunbar tested this hypothesis by sampling conversation groups in various European locations among people engaged in relaxing social interactions with friends. He and his students found that conversation in these groups usually involves one speaker and three listeners, as compared to "a conventional grooming interaction—which always consists of just one groomer and one groomee" (121). Dunbar concludes that "language evolved among humans to replace social grooming because the grooming time required by our large groups made impossible demands on our time. . . . In a nutshell . . . language evolved to allow us to gossip" (79, 192)

Today, few of us forage for food (except in the grocery store) but Dunbar maintains that our evolved psychology is still attuned to foraging. As he writes:

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> We may live in the center of enormous modern conurbations like New York or Karachi, but we still know only about the same number of people as our long-distant ancestors. . . . The figure of 150 seems to represent the maximum number of individuals with whom we can have a genuine social relationship, the kind of relationship that goes with knowing who they are and how they relate to us. (77)

This leads Dunbar to discern a problem: the difficulty of assembling a close-knit social network under modern conditions. Kinship networks and other strong ties are "fundamental to our survival" (202) but industrialization has forced us to live in a world of strangers where large networks of weak ties prevail. Our minds "are designed to handle the kinds of small-scale societies that have characterized all but the last minutes of our evolutionary history" (207). In the long run, Dunbar warns, a "lack of social contact," "the lack of a sense of community, may be the most pressing social problem of the new millennium" (203).

Individualistic Humanity

> To show how a fact is useful is not to explain how it originated or why it is what it is. . . . The need we have of things cannot give them existence. . . . It is to causes of another sort that they owe their existence.
>
> —Emile Durkheim, *The Rules of the Sociological Method*

Whether Dunbar's concerns about modernity are justified depends, of course, on the validity of his analysis of the relationships among grooming, group size, and speech. While some scholars applaud Dunbar for bringing together so many disparate data sets, others are critical, especially those within the discontinuity camp (see, e.g., Dunbar 1993; Steele 1996). Even continuity theorists, however, have raised questions about Dunbar's overriding emphasis on grooming and his sampling procedures.

As a sociologist who studies primate networks, I can only praise Dunbar's field research, especially that on gelada baboons. But there are some problems of a sociological nature that I think Dunbar needs to address. First, while the correlations between neocortical size and group size support Dunbar's theory, he needs to consider other species, especially New World monkeys and apes. As yet, it is

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premature to conclude that there is a causal relationship. Second, the origin of speech must be distinguished from its contemporary functions. When cause and function are confounded, there is the possibility of an illegitimate teleology: the end result—the need for social cohesion—causes the event—speech—that is instrumental to this end. Dunbar can overcome this problem if he shows how the need for cohesion was met through *specific* selection processes.

Third, Dunbar's analysis of the social role of grooming is skewed toward monkeys. In monkeys, bouts of dyadic grooming promote strong ties, especially within kinship-based cliques. Humans, however, are not monkeys but hominoids: our closest relatives are the orangutan, the gorilla, and the chimpanzee, among whom mutual grooming is relatively rare (with the exception of the male chimpanzee) (see Goosen 1991). Moreover, apes have less closely knit social networks than monkeys (see Maryanski 1996b and Maryanski and Turner 1992). The orangutan is virtually solitary; the gorilla is self-contained, with surprisingly few overt social interactions; and the chimpanzee, in the words of Jane Goodall (1986, 147), "rarely sees all the members of his community on the same day and never sees them two days in succession."

Apes, in short, don't seem to need monkey-style intimacy and community. Instead, apes have a penchant for many weak ties.[3] For example, on a daily basis adult and adolescent chimpanzees travel alone or join temporary mixed parties, whose integrity seemingly depends on the mere presence of some cluster of individuals. Only a mother and her young form a stable unit, and this unit does not endure over time: offspring prefer to be self-reliant after puberty. Lacking the relational obligations that come with membership in tight-knit cliques, chimpanzees flit from one interpersonal relationship to another, linked at the micro level only by weak and transitory ties, and at the macro level by a regional sense of community. Thus, within a bounded forest area, chimpanzees freely join and depart from various social circles within a structurally cohesive community level of organization.

If our closest relatives prefer autonomy and individualism over collectivism, these proclivities are likely to be part of our evolved nature as well. If human beings have as great a need as Dunbar claims for a great many intimate, grooming-like ties, this need must have developed after protohominids left the African forest and moved to savanna areas of high predation, where tighter relation-

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ships might promote survival and reproductive success. But if chimpanzees like Kanzi are already equipped with an auditory cortex for speech perception, early hominids surely were, too. The next logical step would be to make voluntary sounds possible by shifting vocalizations from emotionally based (limbic) to rationally based (cortical) control. This shift, and basic alterations in vocal apparatus, would set the scene for a community of speakers to invent language, without any need to replace grooming—as suggested by the near-absence of social grooming among, and the weak relational ties of, our hominoid relatives. Rather, language probably had an origin independent of social needs, even though speech could then become a force for greater social integration (Maryanski 1996a).

Still, social forms do not leave fossils, so neither my hypothesis nor Dunbar's is empirically testable. It is possible, then, that early humans swapped social grooming for speech. But Dunbar's theory of an optimal group size, which is derived directly from his grooming thesis, *is* testable: we can generalize it to the human beings we know. Are human groups—whether living as hunter-gatherers or as city dwellers—predisposed to remain in groups of fewer than about 151 members?

Group Size and Industrialization

> The development of the public mind shows itself by the fact that a sufficient number of groups is present which have form and organization. This number is sufficient in the sense that they give an individual of many gifts the opportunity to pursue each of his interests in association with others. Such multiplicity of groups implies that the ideals of collectivism and of individualism are approximated to the same extent.
>
> —Georg Simmel, *Conflict and the Web of Group Affiliations*

If we assemble what is known about the lifeways of hunter-gatherers, we find a remarkable range of regularities—foraging, the absence of privately owned land and formal leadership, a division of labor by sex and age, similar worldviews, and an egalitarian ethic. The greatest objective similarity is the need for foraging peoples to maintain a high ratio of resources to population. If they fail to do so, they face environmental degradation, triggering Malthusian

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pressures to return the population to sustainable levels (see Catton, Lenski, and Buttel 1986). *Survival* demands that hunter-gatherers keep density levels to 150 individuals or less (see Lenski, Nolan, and Lenski 1995; and Maryanski and Turner 1992).

Would a surge in population trigger cognitive overload? Would the group scatter? This is unknowable because the hallmark of a foraging economy is a flexible, loose-knit social structure—not a stable, tight-knit group. Kinship and marriage patterns allow both fission and fusion to accommodate a shifting collection of individuals whose movements depend on seasonal resources. In fact, the hunting and gathering organizational pattern does not greatly deviate from chimpanzee organization: both hominoids move about within a larger community range where there is considerable individual mobility and a high degree of personal autonomy, and where social ties are fluid. Hunter-gatherers do not display the great sociality and collectivism that Dunbar imputes to human nature.

After 3 million years of nomadic living, first as early hominids and then as hunting and gathering humans, the genus *Homo* took up sedentary living as simple horticultural farmers, and then in early state-dominated agricultural societies, which led to a steady increase in societal complexity and new modes of subsistence, technology, and settlement. In so doing, we joined insects as the only two entities to have evolved macro-societies with millions of members, social classes, and a complex division of labor. By examining the sociological features of insect and human macrosocieties, Richard Machalek (1991) concluded that their paramount precondition is the rare ability to live and cooperate with strangers. In most social species, kinship connections based on individual recogniton of relatives are the basis of social cooperation. In social insects such as ants, however, communication is based on chemical cues, with no evidence that kin members recognize each other as individuals. Ants interact with only five or six occupationally fixed categories of ants—not millions of individual ants. This allows for task specialization and a complex division of labor. Similarly, human beings use "cognitive culture," especially speech, to sort human beings into status-role categories. This makes it possible for us to participate in a complex division of labor because it facilitates our cooperative interaction with "personal strangers." Machalek points out, however, that unlike the social insects, "we are capable of forming

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cooperative social systems based either upon personal relationships or impersonal status-role attributes."

By contrast, Dunbar claims that there is not only an upper limit of 150 to human group size, but that we innately pursue strong ties to groups of roughly that size. But under current conditions,

> separated from relatives and with limited opportunities to create circles of friends, the modern city dweller is forced increasingly to draw on the ready-made imaginative family of the soap opera for a social life and a sense of community. . . . No one has looked at this in any detail yet, but it won't surprise me if, when they do, they find that soap opera characters begin to fill the actual role of network members for those whose real social networks are kept well below the natural limit of 150 by their social or economic situation. (199)

Dunbar is echoing one of the classic assumptions in sociology: that macro societies, especially industrial ones, foster anomie and alienation because of a lack of intimate face-to-face community relations. But as Rose Coser points out, industrial society actually expands network ties by allowing us greater opportunities for complex social relationships. Industrial society offers individuals the opportunity to play multiple roles. This plurality of social roles allows us to have both weak and strong ties. Weak ties allow creativity, freedom of choice, and a "richness of perspective that comes from a multiplicity of relationships" (Coser 1991, 168). While multiple roles can place diverse and sometimes conflicting demands upon individuals it is misleading, according to Coser, to equate industrial society with alienation simply because networks of urban dwellers are rich in weak rather than strong ties.

Little empirical evidence supports or refutes either Dunbar's posited relationship between group size and speech or his belief that our mental equipment predisposes a natural group size of 150 individuals. In real life, hunter-gatherers would never face cognitive overload in a foraging setting, while we would surely face "psychological strain" trying to service and main 150 overlapping strong ties in an urban setting. Dunbar's neat calculations of neocortical volume and group size are intriguing and puzzling. But lacking hard evidence, their explanation may have nothing to do with our evolved psychology at all.

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NOTES

1. The idea behind the historical-comparative approach was to compare the grammars of ancient texts. In 1786 Sir William Jones, a distinguished Sanskrit scholar, formally established a historical connection between Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, and the Germanic languages. Reconstruction of proto-European was successful, but the prehistory of other language families remained elusive because so few of them were written down until recently.
2. Primates communicate using the sense organs—olfactory, visual, auditory, and general somatic (or active touch). The olfactory is part of the subcortical (or limbic) cortex, which specializes mostly in emotionally based responses to environmental stimuli. In contrast, the visual, auditory, and haptic modalities specialize in higher-order functions that involve rational, intended responses to environmental stimuli. The prehensile or grasping hands of monkeys, apes, and humans are under cortical (or voluntary) control and are used extensively for tactile (e.g., grooming) communication. The visual modality in monkeys, apes, and humans is also under cortical control, and sends subtle and intended messages through posturing (using limbs, head, hips, etc.) and facial displays (using jaws, lips, eyes, etc.). In comparison, the auditory modality is specialized for early warning responses, especially to brief and abrupt sounds such as the thuds, snaps, and crackles that signal predation danger (see Masterton 1992). The auditory system for all primates is housed in the neocortex, with sound perception under cortical control (at least for chimpanzees and humans), but the vocal-auditory channel for acoustic production for monkeys and apes is largely under limbic control, which is why their vocalizations are emotionally laden responses. Monkey calls have some volitional components, but higher primates usually channel their rational responses through their visual and tactile senses (Maryanski 1997). Only in humans is vocal production under cortical control (see Sutton and Jurgens 1988 and Snowdon 1990).
3. To measure the degree of attachment among nonhuman primates, researchers record such behaviors as food sharing, embracing, mutual grooming, aiding and protecting, continual close proximity, and the endurance and emotional intensity of a social relation. Applying network theory, a tie is considered a strong one where there are high rates of interaction, extensive physical contact (e.g., mutual grooming) and a very stable relationship over time. A tie is considered a weak one when individuals interact in a positive way from time to time as the occasion demands. Scaling strength of ties for well-studied species is a straightforward procedure since the social tendencies that age and sex class conspecifics reveal have been consistently confirmed by researchers (see Cheney et al. 1986 and Hinde 1986; see Wellman and Berkowitz 1988 and Freeman, White and Romney 1989 for readings on network analysis).

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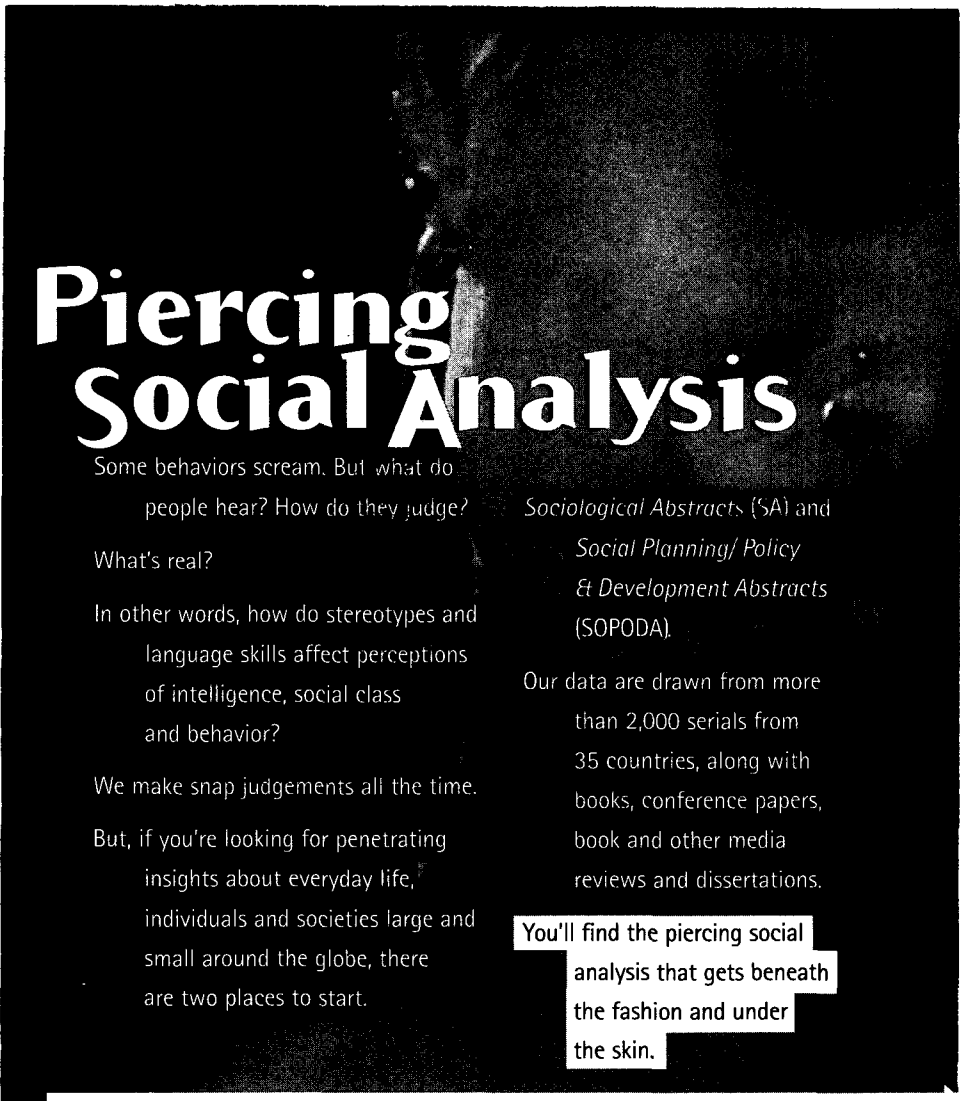

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Keith F. Otterbein

THE ORIGINS OF WAR

ABSTRACT: *In* War Before Civilization, *Lawrence H. Keeley argues that prehistoric as well as primitive mankind was more warlike than has been recognized by most scholars. Such scholars subscribe, according to Keeley, to "the myth of the peaceful savage," the subtitle of his book. But Keeley, who leads a long list of Hawks, has replaced this myth with another, the "myth of the warlike savage." Anthropologists who argue that serious warfare arose only after the rise of the state and civilization understate the extent of serious warfare in prehistory. The evidence for warfare among primates, prehistoric mankind, early agriculturalists, and primitive peoples suggests that the truth lies somewhere between the myth of the peaceful savage and the myth of the warlike savage.*

There is no consensus about the origins of war or about how armed combat developed over time. Indeed, these are highly controversial topics. On the one hand there are "Hawks" who believe that warfare arose about 5 million years ago and has characterized mankind in all places ever since. On the other hand, the "Doves" believe that warfare arose only about 5000 years ago, when the first states developed, and that war then spread to peaceful

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hunter-gatherers and agriculturists. These are ideal types, of course; nonetheless, most scholars fall—they don't need to be pushed—into one or the other of the categories. The survey of the evidence that follows seems to produce a position that runs between the lines formed by the ideal types. Armed combat probably emerged millions of years ago, then underwent successive qualitative changes, not necessarily in terms of increased lethality, but in terms of complexity.

Early Man: Hunter, Scavenger, or Cooperator?

No physical evidence has been discovered which tells us whether early hominoids (*australopithecines* and early members of the genus *Homo*) killed each other. Perhaps because of the absence of evidence, rival theories have been rampant.

The Killer Ape theory held sway until the 1970s. Early man was viewed as a predator who hunted other animals and sometimes his own kind. This "hunting hypothesis" received serious elaboration at the hands of physical anthropologists and zoologists such as Raymond Dart, Sherwood L. Washburn, and Conrad Lorenz, and popular treatment by dramatist Robert Ardrey (Cartmill 1993, 1–14, 189–202). It can also be found much earlier, in Darwin's *The Descent of Man* ([1871] 1902, 73, 78). As physical evidence accumulated, however, it became clear that *Australopithecus* did not make tools or weapons. As physical anthropologist Matt Cartmill has stated (1993, 17): "The current consensus among scientists is that the man-apes, like the antelopes and baboons found with them, were killed, dragged to the caves, and eaten by big carnivores of some sort." Nevertheless, the Killer Ape theory has recently reemerged. Based on recent observations of chimpanzee bands attacking and killing members of other chimpanzee bands, primatologist Richard Wrangham has developed the theory that since early man and the chimpanzees are similar (chimps have changed little in five million years), it is permissible to infer that currently observed chimpanzee behavior patterns were characteristic of the common ancestor of both (Wrangham and Peterson 1996, 46–47). Presumably there is a genetic basis for the behavior patterns (ibid., 198).

During the period when the Killer Ape theory had fallen out of favor, I made a comparison between human and chimpanzee fight-

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ing and drew a conclusion about its evolutionary implications (Otterbein 1985, xxii):

> The roots of war lie in the localization of related males, a condition that goes back to the common ancestor of humans, chimpanzees, bonobos (pigmy chimpanzees), and gorillas. . . . A comparison of warlike hunting and gathering bands with chimpanzees of Gombe reveals three additional features of "sociopolitical" organization which are shared for a total of four such features: (1) localized groups of related males; (2) a leader with limited prerogatives—e.g. greater access to females and choice food; (3) bands that may segment with boundaries between them emerging; (4) raids on other bands, resulting in males, females, and children being attacked and killed. . . . If the common ancestor of man and the other hominoids was patrilocal,[1] then early man . . . is also likely to have been organized into localized groups of related males, groups that engaged in intergroup conflict.

If this is correct, the origin of war lies neither in the Paleolithic nor the Neolithic, but five million years ago. Furthermore, if it is correct, Paleolithic man engaged in warfare and so have hunter-gatherer peoples through all times. Paleolithic man includes both *H. erectus* and *H. sapiens*, tool makers who thus had the capability to make and use weapons.

Since the 1970s, however, the prevailing view has been that early man was a scavenger. He was prey, not predator. This view suggests: (1) An ability, not only physical but emotional, to flee from danger (i.e., a fear response). Barbara Ehrenreich argues that a passion for war developed in the trauma of being hunted by animals and eaten. The terror inspired by the devouring beast led to our human habit of sacralizing violence, to blood rites, and to war (Ehrenreich 1997, 22). (2) An ability to sleep at night by being able to climb to hard-to-reach places; that is, places where predators cannot climb. Individual animals that could not successfully flee from predators and animals who traveled at night would be eaten. Avoiding this fate may have led to the creation of fortifications. (3) An ability to cooperate in repulsing a predator. Darwin provides examples, and he concludes by noting: "As I have repeatedly seen, a chimpanzee will throw any object at hand at a person who offends him . . . " (1902, 116). Cooperation is accomplished by ganging up on the predator. There is film footage of wild chimpanzees attacking with weapons

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an animated stuffed leopard (Kortlandt 1975). Here may lie the roots of cooperative hunting. At some point in human history this had to occur, possibly in Kenya 400,000 years ago where a giant baboon, now extinct, appears to have been hunted by *H. erectus* (Gowlett 1984, 72–73).

A third view is that early man was both killer and scavenger. Since no label for this category of theories seems to exist, I will coin one: Cooperator. Cooperation would be useful not only for defense from predators, whether they be carnivores or other early hominoids, but for hunting other animals or one's own kind. Zoologist Robert Bigelow (1975) and cultural anthropologist Bruce Knauft (1994b) argue that group selection is as important as individual selection, if not more so, in human evolution, since groups that developed affiliative behavior and communication would have tended to survive. Meanwhile, within a group, aggressively self-interested individuals might be killed (Knauft 1996).

In the past, I have argued that the political community with the more efficient military organization would survive and expand territorially (Otterbein 1970, 5, 108). The most cooperative groups of early hominoids, because of success in both defense and hunting, would have been the ones to survive. Robert Carneiro concurs:

> In intersocietal selection . . . the unit on which selection operates is not the culture trait as such, but the society bearing it. As societies compete, the less well adapted tend to fall by the wayside, leaving outstanding those best able to withstand the competition. (In ibid., xii)

The argument for cultural group selection (Bower 1995) pertains to societies at all levels of sociopolitical complexity. The literature on bands of hunter-gatherers yields the view that "any act that is seen by the members of a band as threatening the survival of their group will subject the perpetrator of that act to capital punishment" (Otterbein 1986, 49). Offenses that endanger the group are incest, sacrilegious acts (such as sorcery, witchcraft, and violations of taboos), and homicide (ibid., 49–60). Capital punishment could be a selection mechanism that, by removing antisocial individuals from the group, removes from the gene pool genes that could have prompted their unesirable behavior, such as slow electrodermal recovery and hyporeactiveness (cf. Otterbein 1988a, 634).

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There are, thus, three competing categories of theories that are intended to illuminate the question of whether early hominoids killed one another—Man the Hunter, Man the Scavenger, and Man the Cooperator. Although I believe the latter category is most likely to contain the correct theory, the lack of evidence suggests we probably never will have any theory that approaches a definitive answer. Rival theories will surely continue to be produced.

Paleolithic Warfare

Unlike the previous period, there is clear evidence for intrahuman killing in the Paleolithic, the era of tool-making hunter-gatherers. Most "claims for intraspecific killing are based primarily upon depressed fractures found on the cranial remains of fossil men. . . . It is difficult to interpret the skeletal evidence" (Roper 1969, 447–48). A depressed fracture can be caused in numerous ways. However, cave art from France apparently shows human beings wounded by weapons (Roper 1969, 447; Bachechi, Fabbri, and Mallegni 1997, 136). One figure appears to have seven shafts protruding from his body. Certainly weapons were at hand: dart throwers appeared about 40,000 years ago in the Old World, while the bow and arrow developed about 15,000 years ago (Farmer 1994, 681). In the New World, the dart thrower appeared about 8500 years ago and the bow and arrow about 1500 years ago (Dickson 1985, 8). Human bones pierced by projectile points have been found at six sites, dating from 14,000 to 10,000 years ago (Bachechi, Fabbri, and Mallegni 1997, 137). This evidence suggests to me that the cave paintings depict actual killings.

But are the cave paintings and forensic evidence sufficient to document warfare? Accident can be ruled out—given the large number of projectiles sticking in one person—but we cannot rule out human sacrifice, capital punishment, homicide, assassination, or the killing in warfare of an unarmed combatant or noncombatant. (The human pin cushions are not shown with weapons in hand.) Marilyn Keyes Roper concludes in her extensive survey (1969, 448) that "although there seems to be sound evidence for sporadic intrahuman killing, the known data is [sic] not sufficient to document warfare." But the antiquarian in me says we are mighty close to the origin of war.

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Rock art in Arnhem Land, Northern Australia, shows the development of armed combat over a 6000-year period (10,000 to 4000 years ago). Archaeologists Paul S. Tacon and Christopher Chippendale describe three phases: (1) Figures confronting each other use boomerangs as both throwing and shock weapons, and carry barbed spears. Spears are shown plunged into fallen figures. Only one skirmish is depicted. (2) Figures carry hooked sticks (dart throwers?) and three-pronged barbed spears as well as boomerangs and barbed spears. Large numbers of figures are shown in opposing groups with boomerangs and spears flying overhead, and there are fallen dead and wounded. (3) Battle scenes are common and the figures (let's call them warriors now) are energetically engaged in armed combat (1994, 214–24). Following my evolutionary scheme (Otterbein 1970) and Bruce Knauft's thoughts on human evolution (Knauft 1994b), Tacon and Chippendale relate the shift from individual combat to large-scale battles to the development of complex social organization, and they further argue that increased military organization led to military success and helped to establish territories and boundaries (1994, 226–27). Knauft pushes their interpretation even further by relating the three phases to the four levels of armed combat in Murngin warfare (1994a, 229–31; 1996, 84–88). We surely come face to face with warfare, then, as early as 10,000 years ago.

This is confirmed by the ethnographic record, which shows that most hunter-gatherers engaged in warfare. Cross-cultural studies have consistently documented this. Hobhouse, Wheeler, and Ginsberg showed that out of 56 hunting societies 49, or 88 percent, practiced war (1915, 228–33). Quincy Wright, in an even larger sample incorporating the previous study, showed that of 216 hunting societies, 198 (92 percent) had wars (1942, 556). In my cross-cultural study of war, using a randomly chosen sample of 50 societies, I found that of nine band-level societies, seven (78 percent) had warfare (1970, 145–48). In a cross-cultural study that focused only upon hunter-gatherers, Carol Ember found that of 31 foragers, 20 (65 percent) saw combat between communities or larger entities at least once every two years, while only three societies experienced warfare rarely or never; thus, 28 out of 31 (90 percent) engaged in warfare (1978, 444). In cross-cultural study of the killing of combatants and noncombatants, using a probability sample of 60 societies, I found that out of eight hunter-gatherer societies, six (75 percent) experienced war. These cross-cultural studies, of course,

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concern only hunter-gatherer bands observed over the past two centuries. (Interestingly, the earlier studies show bands to be more warlike, perhaps because the later studies include recently pacified societies.) The above figures are probably too high for the Paleolithic, yet they show that people organized into hunter-gatherer bands are quite capable of warfare.

Nonetheless, and contrary to what many anthropologists would lead us to believe, there is great variability among recently observed hunter-gatherers in terms of the frequency of war (Otterbein 1991), homicide, and capital punishment (Otterbein 1988a). This same great variability should also hold for the past. I have conducted research suggesting that the frequency of warfare is related to hunting (see below), while capital punishment is related to norm violations (such as homicide and sacrilege) or believed norm violations (witchcraft) (Otterbein 1986, 1996).

Understanding tactics is important to assessing the evidence about warfare. A detailed analysis of numerous cases over the past 30 years suggests that the ambush is probably used by all warring societies.[2] Thus, attacks on single individuals such as that depicted in the rock paintings should probably be considered examples of warfare even if armed combat has not occurred. Indeed, Jane Goodall has reported that the chimpanzees of Gombe patrol their territories and attack any lone aliens they discover.

Goodall also reports chimpanzee precursors of the other main hunter-gatherer tactic: the line. Chimpanzee patrols that encounter each other shout and throw sticks and stones. Eventually they draw apart (Goodall 1986, 488–534). Like groups of human warriors who typically confront each other in demonstrative line formations, a test of strength is occurring. This evidence seems to me to undermine Goodall's own conclusion that, "until our remote ancestors acquired *language*, they would not have been able to engage in the kind of planned intergroup conflicts that could develop into warfare—into organized, armed combat" (ibid., 533, emphasis original). How much planning is needed for an ambush or a line encounter? Very little, I think.

Cross-cultural research I have conducted on hunter-gatherers shows that those societies which rely heavily upon hunting are more likely to engage in frequent warfare, and further that if large animals are hunted, the likelihood of frequent war increases.[3] Four possible reasons are that hunters have weapons that are likely to be

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suitable for use in warfare; that hunting itself involves searching for and killing prey; that, if seeking prey involves the coordinated activities of hunters, a quasimilitary organization has been created; and that hunters, particularly hunters of large herd animals, may range over a vast region and come in contact with other peoples who also range over a part of the territory and do not wish to share it. These considerations lead Paul Tacon and Christopher Chippendale (1994, 212) to conclude that the hunters who produced the rock art may have been depicting victims of warfare.

However, archaeologist Ofer Bar-Yosef (1986, 158–59) has observed that there is no evidence for warfare in the Near East during the period 12,000–6000 B.C. Although the Natufian peoples in the Near East at the end of the Paleolithic hunted, they appear to have relied much more upon gathering and fishing than did the peoples of Europe who hunted large game animals (Gowlett 1984, 160). If there is a link between hunting and warfare, it may help explain such regional differences in the occurrence and frequency of warfare. Warfare in the period before 6000 B.C. may have been nearly nonexistent in some regions and slowly developing in others. The hunting of large game animals may have hastened the evolution of cooperation. Hunting parties can easily turn to raiding parties. Although defense and revenge are the basic, universal reasons for war, the procurement of food, places to live, and women are also common motives (Otterbein 1970, 63–70). Most men in most societies in the ethnographic record find these things worth fighting for once the weapons and tactics have been developed. Thus, warfare could have developed wherever large game animals were hunted, and through contact between bands it could have spread, with successful defenders becoming attackers. In the process of inter-band contact, ideas about weapons and ambushing could spread from one band to another.

Neolithic Warfare

Evidence for warfare is widespread during the Neolithic, the era of settled agriculturalists, but the evidence is primarily clustered at the end of the period. It consists of skeletal remains that show marks of violence, rock paintings depicting battles between groups of warriors, and remains of defensive walls and villages showing evidence

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that raids and battles took place there. This period produced the rock art of Arnhem Land hunter-gatherers, which shows large battle scenes.

Although the rock paintings clearly show the bow and arrow as a weapon of war, it probably was developed for use in hunting. The majority of paintings show it being used that way. Although the number of types of weapons expanded during the Neolithic to include thrusting spears, light javelins, slings, clubs, and knives, they are not specialized enough to conclude that their sole function was to kill other humans. However, projectile points become smaller (presumably to fit on arrows) and more numerous, suggesting their use for war, since hunting was becoming less important as people became settled agriculturalists. The sling, probably devised by farmers and shepherds to scare animals from fields and flocks, could, like the bow and arrow, have become an early weapon of war.

The first appearance of a professional military organization appears to be at the fortress of Mersin (c. 4300 B.C.) in southern Anatolia, where a garrison with soldiers' quarters was destroyed by an attack (Roper 1975, 327–30). Narrow apertures indicate that the soldiers were archers; a pile of clay sling pellets was also discovered. Fortified towns appear a thousand years or more earlier. One of the best described archaeologically is Hacilar (c. 5300 B.C.) in south-central Anatolia (ibid., 321–23).

Reputedly the most spectacular evidence in the Neolithic for warfare is the fortifications at Jericho dating to 7500 B.C., built on Natufian materials. The fortifications consist of a moat, wall, and tower, the three basic elements of military architecture until the gunpowder age (Keegan 1993, 124). However, Roper (1975, 306) contends that "aside from the defensive structures . . . there are no further signs of warfare." Political scientist Richard A. Gabriel (1990, 30) suggests the walls were "to protect the fields against animals. . . . Later, and somewhat incidentally, the walls would have served as protection against scavenging by seminomadic bands." The most serious doubts come from Bar-Yosef, who, after a detailed investigation of the site, concludes "that a plausible alternative interpretation for the Neolithic walls of Jericho is that they were built in stages as a defense system against floods and mud flows" (1986, 161). Even if the walls and moat are fortifications, which I am inclined to disbelieve, they probably never saw a battle. Without

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other evidence for warfare in the area, they remain an anomaly of no significance to the study of the origins of war.

The settled agriculturalists with uncentralized political systems who dominate the ethnographic record almost invariably engage in warfare. Tribes without war are rare and, like the Toda of South India or the Tikopia of Oceania, are isolated geographically from most other peoples (Otterbein 1970, 20–21).

In a series of cross-cultural studies beginning in 1965 I have shown that fraternal interest groups are related to rape (Otterbein 1979), feuding (Otterbein and Otterbein 1965), and internal war (Otterbein 1968). A fraternal interest group is a localized group of related males who defend the group's interests. Both feuding and internal war are forms of armed combat; feuding occurs within a political community; internal war, between culturally similar political communities. The practices of patrilocal residence and polygyny lead to the development of fraternal interest groups.[4] I suspect that the crystallization of residence rules is related first to the development of language and then to both the development of agriculture and the concomitant increase in population. Patrilocal residence is found in many different physical environments and with many different subsistence technologies. However, it is most likely to be found in societies with one resource procurement strategy—or at most two or three strategies (Fleising and Goldenberg 1987). Fraternal interest groups play an important causal role in warfare in all societies except those at the most advanced levels of sociopolitical complexity—states. In bands, tribes, and chiefdoms, they provide the membership core of most military organizations.

The roots of war lie in the localization of related males, as noted in the section on Early Man. Such groups, in which strong male social bonds would probably have formed, composed the hunting and raiding parties of the Paleolithic. But not until the Neolithic would clearly defined fraternal interest groups have appeared on the scene due to the following of residence rules.

Although fraternal interest groups based on patrilocal residence are found in about 70 percent of the societies on record, there are nevertheless numerous societies without fraternal interest groups, which have matrilocal and neolocal residence. The first type of society witnesses much conflict, rape, feuding, and internal war, whereas societies without fraternal interest groups see little conflict, no rape, no feuding, and no internal war (Otterbein 1994, 142).

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(These are ideal types; not all societies neatly fit into them.) Rape, feuding, and internal war are interrelated; rape can lead to feud (ibid. 124–26), while the military organization whose core is a fraternal interest group can on one day attack a member of a kinship group within the political community, leading to or continuing a feud, and on the next day can ambush a member of another political community (internal war) (Otterbein 1977, 146). Thus, the emergence of the first type of society, which William T. Divale and Marvin Harris (1976) call male supremacist, helps to explain the widespread occurrence of violence in the Neolithic.

This violence can be seen as having a rational basis. Martin Daly and Margo Wilson (1988) have argued that the use of retaliation to deter homicidal attacks upon one's kin group protects the gene pool of that group. Successful warlike peoples have a reproductive advantage. As argued in the section on Early Man, group selection may be more important than individual selection. The defeat and even annihilation of militarily weak groups leaves the stronger groups in control of more and more of the earth's surface. The nineteenth-century Nuer expansion in East Africa is the best-known example. This tribal people used throwing clubs and thrusting spears to overrun Dinka villages in dawn raids (Otterbein 1995).

During the Neolithic, ambushes and lines as well as dawn raids became institutionalized. The Dani of Highland New Guinea employed arranged line battles that produced few casualties, ambushes that produced a few more, and massive dawn raids that killed hundreds. Battles were a means of testing the strength of an adversary. If one community appeared weak, two others might join forces and annihilate the weaker in a dawn raid (Heider 1997, 85–120; Otterbein 1985, xxi). The Yanomamo of Amazonia raided each other but their fortified villages generally kept attackers at bay. To break the stalemate one village would secretly ally itself with an ally of its enemy. The betraying friend would invite its erstwhile ally to a feast. Then the hosts and their new allies would attack, kill many males, and seize the women (Chagnon 1977; Otterbein 1985, xx).[5] The Tiwi of Northern Australia engaged in arranged spear battles that resulted in low casualties (Hart and Pilling 1960, 79–87) and sneak attacks/night raids that resulted in heavy casualties (Pilling 1968, 158; 1988, 93–95). Although the arranged battles were the primary mode of combat after the coming of the British, they may

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have been a testing of strength in pre-contact times. If a group appeared weak, it might be raided.

Bronze-Age Warfare and the Origin of the State

Centralized political systems—chiefdoms and states—arose in the Near East during the Bronze Age (c. 4000 B.C. to c. 1200 B.C.). In the New World, centralized political systems arose at a much later date in Mesoamerica and Peru. Although settled agriculturalists in villages or towns appear as early as 7500 B.C. (e.g., Jericho), these tribal-level peoples with, I believe, well-defined kinship groups led by an adult male or elders (forming a council) took a long time to develop into states. Intermarriage between villages could have led to larger, politically more complex societies. The initial appearance of chiefdoms in the Near East may have been around 5500 B.C. (Carneiro 1981, 19). What happened next is a mystery. One theory has villages conquering villages, thus giving rise to chiefdoms (the conquest theory of the origin of the state). Another line of thought has people advancing a village leader to a position of greater authority ("social contract" or integrative theories). The conquest theory, dating from the nineteenth century, has more advocates (cf. Otterbein 1973, 947–48); the social contract theory has many fewer (Lowie 1927, Service 1975, Hallpike 1987; see Claessen and Skalnik 1978, 16–17).

That fortified towns in Anatolia were attacked seems to support the conquest theory, while the existence of unfortified towns in Mesopotamia and Egypt at the beginning of the Bronze Age—believed to be ruled by priests—supports the social contract theory. The ethnographic evidence is also mixed. Three types of chiefdoms have been identified—minimal, typical, and maximal (Carneiro 1981, 47), as have three types of early states—inchoate, typical, and transitional (transitional, that is, to a mature state; Claessen and Skalnik 1978, 589–93). The two scales overlap: a maximal chiefdom is the same as an inchoate early state. This level of centralized political system is not only extremely warlike, but despotic. Inchoate early states attack their neighbors, whom they proceed to subordinate, destroy, or conquer. Newly formed states control their own populations through the use of terror—there are executions for many crimes, torture is part of the judicial process, and death is

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made as painful as possible (Otterbein 1986, 73–82). Minimal and typical chiefdoms, in contrast, are peaceful and internally harmonious. The chief is an agent of voluntary redistribution (Service 1962, 143–77; Otterbein 1970, 17–19). At some point the redistribution ceases to be voluntary and the surplus is used to support the chief's followers, who become a police or military force. Despotism settles in and conquests begin.

Julian Steward's (1955) classic and widely accepted theory of the origin of civilization, while not usually considered a social contract theory (Claessen and Skalnik 1978, 17), appears to be just that. Steward sees states evolving independently in six regions: the Nile River, the Tigris-Euphrates Rivers, the Indus River, the Yellow River, Highland Peru, and the Valley of Mexico. These *pristine* or *primary* states went through similar stages, with warfare becoming important only in the latter stages, after a substantial amount of centralization had occurred. Control of water for irrigation, not warfare, was the prime mover in the initial development of states. Warfare becomes vitally important only after population expansion, resulting in the need for more land by each state, triggered wars of conquest. The *idea* of statehood then spread from these six pristine or primary sites to other regions where tribal peoples developed their own *secondary* states (Fried 1967, 231–42). In these regions, wars of conquest were used to create states.

A study of 21 early states found only two features common to all: an ideology of statehood and an economic surplus (Claessen and Skalnik 1978, 629). To these two features I have added a third (Otterbein 1985, xxiii–xxiv):

> Whether or not war and conquest occur frequently, a society cannot become or remain a state unless it has an efficient military organization, which is as strong as or stronger than those of its neighbors. Moreover, political communities with high military sophistication . . . are likely to have expanding territorial boundaries. These efficient military organizations are likely to have professional military personnel. This finding is corroborated by the comparative study of early states: most early states had standing armies, the sovereign was the supreme commander, and there were military specialists (Claessen and Skalnik 1978, 562–63, 587). Thus, the presence of an efficient military organization appears to be a third necessary condition for state formation. Indeed, the other two necessary conditions can be viewed as contributing to the development of a large, effi-

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> cient military organization: the idea of statehood carries with it the notion of sovereignty (a situation which can be maintained only if an efficient military organization is present), and a surplus permits a concentration of people and a channeling of resources into weapons and subsistence for full-time military personnel.

More recently these same three factors have been independently identified as responsible for the evolution of chiefdoms (Earle 1991, 14–15).

Thus, centralized political systems probably arose in the following manner. Hunter-gatherer bands became sedentary as plant domestication slowly developed. Population grew. Villages became towns, then cities. Tribes became chiefdoms, then states. Political leaders first gained formality, then power (Otterbein 1977, 124–32). The idea of the state emerged, a surplus became available, and an efficient military was developed. Primary states arose in regions where warfare was not prevalent. Only after the state developed did warfare become a central concern to these polities. The social-contract theory appears to explain the origin of pristine states; only after there were pristine states in a region does the conquest theory seem valid. The idea of statehood and how to achieve it through wars of conquest spread to regions where tribal warfare prevailed. Secondary states arose. City-states attacked each other either to obtain a surplus or to control trade routes; Roper believes that fighting to control the lengthy trade routes through Anatolia was the major reason for the development of warfare in the late Neolithic (Roper 1975, 329–31).

The form of armed combat employed seems to have grown directly out of the tactics of tribal-level peoples: raids and battles. Strategy also had its roots in tribal society. Deceit in diplomatic negotiations, as with the Dani and Yanomamo, probably played a large role. If a surprise attack on a city did not succeed, the attackers and defenders might mass troops and engage in frontal assaults on a battlefield near the defenders' city. Although both ambushes and lines were used, manoeuvre and flank attacks of the sort later developed by great commanders such as Rameses II, Hannibal, and Alexander did not occur. The larger army was more likely to win; since the largest city-states would have the largest armies, the largest cities would survive. Armies of similarly equipped soldiers engaged in frontal attacks are found in all six primary state regions. They are

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also found among secondary states throughout the world. *Coercive diplomacy* would have developed. Negotiators from a city-state with a large army could threaten attack if a city-state with a small army did not pay tribute. Complex fortifications developed to prevent surprise attack and to make it possible for a city-state with a small army to resist coercive diplomacy and avoid battles against superior forces. Siege operations developed.

Battles and siege warfare thus became the two major tactics of warfare employed by centralized political systems. In battles, lines were employed, but the soldiers were organized into units with their own officers; the only tactic employed was a frontal attack; the sovereign was the supreme commander, and he participated in combat (Claessen and Skalnik 1978, 640–42); leadership was heroic, with the soldiers being directed from the front lines (Keegan 1987). Battles such as this are depicted on buildings and monuments and are recounted in writing. Battle casualties were high for both sides, with the loser often having extremely high casualties (Otterbein 1970, 81–84). These high casualties contrast sharply with the battles that occur in tribal societies, where either side may withdraw after one or a few casualties, having tested the strength of a rival political community. State-level battles are intended to destroy the adversary, not to test its strength. Classicist Victor Hanson (1989) argues that the quest for victory in a *decisive battle* of this sort originated in Greek hoplite warfare (650–338 B.C.), but it appears that Thutmose at Megiddo (1458 B.C.) and Rameses II at Kadesh (1285 B.C.) were seeking decisive victory in battle. This change can be explained by a *coercive command structure*. In an early state, military leaders (which include the sovereign) can force soldiers to fight even when outnumbered: Corporal and capital punishment can be used to enforce discipline. Although two out of three uncentralized political systems have a "high" degree of subordination (Otterbein 1970, 24), centralized political systems use much more coercion than uncentralized ones do.

Siege warfare develops in response to fortifications surrounding towns, cities, or military fortresses. Fortifications correspond to the level of sociopolitical complexity: in a cross-cultural study, only about half of the uncentralized political systems had fortifications, while nearly all centralized political systems did (Otterbein 1970, 60). A high frequency of warfare also correlates with fortifications (Griffiths 1973).

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To summarize, then, both hunting and war arose from group cooperation. They are probably linked. Regional differences in the presence of warfare may relate to the importance of hunting and the kind of animals hunted. Ambushes and lines were the basic tactics of warfare among both hunter-gatherers and agriculturalists. Fortifications developed slowly in the Late Neolithic and are related to both warfare and emerging political centralization. Many societies developed fraternal interest groups, and these became military organizations; this led to the further spread as well as the intensification of warfare. The defeat and annihilation of less-militaristic groups was a mechanism of group selection that left the stronger groups in control of more and more of the earth's surface. Once centralized political communities emerged, probably for non-military reasons, these primary states spread the idea that statehood could be achieved through wars of conquest. Secondary states were created. A new basic pattern of warfare arose, based upon large-scale decisive battles and protracted sieges of fortified towns and cities that were, in turn, made possible by the emergence of centralized, coercive states.

Hawks vs. Doves

The preceding survey of the literature leans toward the "hawkish" view that prehistorical peoples, hunter-gatherers, and tribal peoples both had the propensity to go to war and did, in fact, often go to war. It thus undermines what Lawrence Keeley, in *War Before Civilization: The Myth of the Peaceful Savage* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), calls "the myth of the peaceful savage": the notion that prehistoric peoples and hunter-gatherers did not go to war and that tribal peoples, although they went to war, fought nonlethal, game-like battles; i.e., the notion that primitive warfare is desultory, ineffective, "unprofessional," and unserious (11).

The idea of the *prehistoric peace*[6] or the *pacified past* (17–24)—the belief that hunter-gatherers or band-level societies did not engage in warfare—was earlier disputed by Robert K. Dentan (1988) and Carol R. Ember (1978); I had earlier attacked the idea that when war occurred among tribal-level societies it was ritualistic and game-like in nature (Otterbein 1970, 33). Keeley learned about the "myth of the peaceful savage" when two research proposals submit-

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ted to the National Science Foundation, to conduct further archaeological research in Belgium, were rejected because he referred to ditch-palisades as fortifications. Reviewers could not accept that these indicated early warfare; Keeley changed his proposal—fortifications became "enclosures"—and he was funded. Until the late 1980s, Keeley tells us, archaeologists believed that prehistoric warfare was unimportant; then archaeological thinking suddenly changed. "The resistance that we archaeologists showed to the notion of prehistoric war, and the ease with which it was overcome when the relevant evidence was recognized, impressed me and convinced me that a book on this subject would be worthwhile" (Keeley 1996, x). Similarly, while a number of cultural anthropologists wrote about the warfare of nonstate societies, the myth of the peaceful savage has predominated.

However, for Keeley the battle has been won in archaeology, while in cultural anthropology the old myth lives on. Although Keeley cites the research on warfare of numerous anthropologists, he views as more representative of the field the work of Brian Ferguson and Neil Whitehead (1992). They argue that war presently observed in tribal zones is actually generated by the expansion of states, which produces wars of resistance and rebellion, ethnic soldiering, and internecine warfare. Keeley accuses Ferguson and Whitehead of being neo-Rousseauians (20–21, 203, 205):

> Although archaeologists may have pacified the past almost unconsciously, a handful of social anthropologists have recently codified this vague prejudice into a theoretical stance that amounts to a Rousseauian declaration of universal prehistoric peace. In some recent papers and books, Brian Ferguson and a number of other scholars have argued that the instances of tribal warfare described by Westerners, including ethnographers, were the product of disequilibrium induced by Western contact and did not represent the primitive condition. (20)

Ferguson (1997, 424), in a review of Keeley's book, replies:

> On the contrary, what I and others have argued is that indigenous war patterns were transformed, frequently intensified, and sometimes created by contact with expanding states, especially for the past 500 years. *No one* is claiming universal prehistoric peace. (Emphasis original.)

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This exchange raises the issue of what pre-contact or pristine warfare was like. Unfortunately, Keeley does not deal directly with the issue. In his eagerness to prove that primitive man was warlike, Keeley lumps together societies at all levels of sociopolitical complexity, and does not identify their degree of acculturation. Likewise, Ferguson, who in recent years has focused on the Yanomamo as his prime example of the influence of contact with modern states, does not provide us with a clear picture of pre-contact Yanomamo warfare. Although he deals with the issue, he concludes: "My own hunch is that before the coming of steel tools, war was limited or even nonexistent between Yanomami communities" (Ferguson 1995, 75).

Although scholars do not like to be categorized, it seems fair to place Keeley at the head of the "Hawks" and Ferguson at the head of the "Doves." Much of the scholarly world can be similarly divided.

An early hawk is anthropologist Robert Carneiro, who for several decades has argued that chiefdoms and states come into existence through conquest: when a village conquers another village, a chiefdom is produced, and when a chiefdom conquers another chiefdom, a state is created (1981, 63–68). Military writer Arther Ferrill thinks "prehistoric warfare . . . was as independently important in early society as the discovery of agriculture . . . In a few places it may actually have been war rather than agriculture that led to the earliest Neolithic settlements" (1985, 13). Not surprisingly Ferrill interprets the walls of Jericho as fortifications (1985, 27–30). Military historian John Keegan likewise interprets the walls as fortifications (1993, 124–25, 139–42). Historian James McRandle argues "that the origins of warfare are to be found in the earliest history of mankind" (1994, viii). After reviewing my 1970 data on the warfare practices of hunter-gatherers, McRandle (1994, 164) concludes:

> Admittedly, these practices could be relatively modern aberrations from a tranquil past, but the continuity of military weapons from the hunting background does offer some reason for suspecting that war may be an institution of some antiquity. The stone spearheads discovered in prehistoric sites, as well as some of the other implements could have served the purposes of combat as well as the hunt.

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Military historian Robert O'Connell (1989a, 30; also see 1989b, 15) accepts the massive stoneworks at Jericho as fortifications and concludes that "war, true war, began somewhere between seven and nine thousand years ago." More recently he has pushed warfare back to the Paleolithic: hunters "were already professional killers . . . it was mandatory to hunt in groups. This was critical, for in these groups were the seeds of armies—or at least platoons" (1995, 29). Primatologist Richard Wrangham and science writer Dale Peterson argue that early man engaged in lethal raiding and that the combat of simpler peoples like the Yanomamo grew directly out of a 5-million-year-old past (1996, 26, 47). Evidence of "real war" is to be found at Jericho, which was "designed as a fortress" (ibid. 171–72). Barbara Ehrenreich rejects the "conventional account of human origins" (i.e., the killer ape theory) and supplants it with the theory that man was the hunted (1997, 22). Eventually man becomes the hunter who hunts to extinction or near-extinction many large animal species (ibid., 118). "Underemployed" hunters became warriors.

These scholars all cite the walls of ancient Jericho as fortifications, giving us an archaeological record of ancient "true" or "real" warfare (e.g., O'Connell 1995, 58–61; Ehrenreich 1997, 121). Indeed, the walls of Jericho are almost a litmus test for indicating whether a scholar is a hawk or a dove: if the scholar interprets the walls as fortifications, he or she is probably a hawk; otherwise he or she is probably a dove. (That Keeley accepts Bar-Yosef's interpretation of Jericho makes him the exception that proves the rule.)

An early dove, contemporaneous with Carneiro, is anthropologist Elman Service, who argued that chiefdoms arise when a political leader assumes the role of being a resource redistributor (1962, 143–77), and that states crystallize when support for the chief turns him into a political leader with both formal authority and power (1975): the social contract theory. Anthropologist C. R. Hallpike (1987) similarly sees primitive warfare as neither functional nor adaptive; it occurs in "situations of low competition" and does not result in losers. He titles a chapter "The Survival of the Mediocre" (1987, 81–145). Political scientist Richard Gabriel (1990, 20) sees warfare as unimportant until roughly 4000 B.C. In the Paleolithic, he contends, there is no evidence that the spear was used against human beings (ibid., 22). Tribal warfare in the Neolithic was

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"highly ritualized" (ibid., 25), and Neolithic town walls, as at Jericho, were to keep out animals (ibid., 30). Two cultural anthropologists, Leslie Sponsel and Thomas Gregor, have deliberately chosen to focus on peace and not war (1994). In an article titled "The Natural History of Peace," Sponsel points out that human prehistory is relatively free of systematic evidence of organized violence. In commenting on fossil evidence, he states that "nonviolence and peace were likely the norm throughout most of human prehistory," and "intrahuman killing was probably rare" (Sponsel 1996, 103; emphasis removed). The walls of Jericho are accepted as fortifications, but, following Gabriel, Sponsel concludes that "the existence of weapons and/or fortifications does not indicate how wide-spread and frequent warfare might have been" (ibid., 105). "Many analyses of the ethnographic record indicate that, in general, nonviolence and peace prevail in hunter-gatherer societies" (ibid., 107). Gregor echoes the same belief: "A good number of societies, especially at the simplest socioeconomic level, appear to have successfully avoided organized violence, that is, war" (1996, xvi).

Archaeologist Jonathan Haas (1996, 1360) contends that

> Archaeologically, there is negligible evidence for any kind of warfare anywhere in the world before about 10,000 years ago. . . . The archaeological record indicates that endemic warfare was much more the exception than the rule until the first appearance of state level societies between 4000 and 2000 B.C. in the centers of world "civilization."

And cultural anthropologist Bruce Knauft, whose work was discussed earlier, has now joined the good company of Sponsel and Gregor (1994, 1996); however, he had earlier produced numerous publications on violence that seemingly placed him among the Hawks (1985).

War before Civilization

Keeley (11) attributes the myth of the peaceful savage to Harry Hoijer, working for Quincy Wright (1942), and to Harry H. Turney-High (1949), thus dating the rise of the myth to the 1950s. But the myth actually arose much earlier. It is a direct outgrowth of nineteenth-century evolutionary thought and twentieth-century

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cultural relativism (Otterbein 1997a). A number of scholars before 1960, uncited by Keeley, made statements that show they subscribed to the myth. They include such eminent anthropologists as Ruth Benedict, Bronislaw Malinowski, and Leslie White. The ethnographic field guide from this era, *Notes and Queries*, maintains that "among the simplest societies warfare is often limited to sporadic conflicts between contiguous groups" (Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland 1951, 141).

Keeley adduces the physical evidence found at excavation sites that can be reasonably interpreted as showing warfare as the "proof" that war existed before there were cities, states, and civilizations. In the Paleolithic, he finds evidence of violent deaths; in the Late Neolithic of Egyptian Nubia, 12,000 to 14,000 years ago, he finds evidence for warfare in the cemetery at Gebel Sahaba; he considers a collection of skulls at Ofnet Cave in Germany to be war trophies; he interprets killings at Talheim in Germany (c. 5000 B.C.) as a massacre. He argues "that warfare is documented in the archaeological record of the past 10,000 years in every well-studied region" but recognizes "that warfare was relatively rare during some periods" (1996, 39). Although I do agree with Keeley's conclusion, I object to sliding from "violent death" in the Paleolithic to "warfare" in the Late Paleolithic without comment upon his changing use of terminology.

New World data are presented later. At Crow Creek, South Dakota (c.1325 A.D.), over 500 people were slaughtered, scalped, and mutilated. Although this predates the arrival of Columbus, as Keeley points out, it does not predate the warring states of Mesoamerica. Keeley seems interested only in refuting the claim that Western contact produced war among tribal peoples. Could not warfare on the Great Plains have been influenced by Aztec and Mayan states and their military practices?

Keeley is even more one-sided in describing the *nature* of primitive warfare. Drawing on data I present in my 1970 study, he asserts "that 90 percent of the cultures in the sample unequivocally engaged in warfare" (28). I, of course, agree. He further shows that high percentages of male populations were mobilized for combat in tribes, ancient states, and modern nations (34); that casualties (64) and war deaths (89, 90) may run high; that the tactics of primitive war are akin to guerrilla warfare—war stripped to its essentials (74–75); and that nearly always, adult male captives are killed: of 230

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societies, only eight spared such captives (213). A cross-cultural study that I have conducted confirms this result: four-fifths of societies kill or torture and kill enemy warriors, and one-third kill women and children (Otterbein 1997b). But to illustrate the violence and lethality of primitive war, Keeley selects descriptions of the most violent and warlike societies, producing a "sample" that is biased to substitute a myth of the warlike savage for the myth of the peaceful savage.

Man is neither, by nature, peaceful nor warlike. Some conditions lead to war, some do not. Among these are: (1) The structure of the polity. Small-scale societies, such as those of the Neolithic peoples with fraternal interest groups, have been shown to be much more violent and prone to go to war than peoples without fraternal interest groups. In more complex societies it is the early state, which is typically despotic, that attacks its neighbors. (2) The military organization. Polities that build efficient professional militaries, whether for attack or defense, are likely to use them eventually in aggressive external war. A high degree of military preparedness leads to war. (3) Coercive diplomacy. Polities with efficient military organizations, such as those found in the Bronze Age, may employ coercive diplomacy to further their interests. Refusal to comply with their demands may lead to armed confrontations that turn into war.

NOTES

1. In patrilocal residence a man brings his new wife to live with him, whereas in matrilocal residence a new husband moves to his wife's family's domicile or to a dwelling nearby.
2. A comparative study, conducted in the Spring of 1995, with the assistance of the students in a political anthropology class revealed a two-component warfare pattern for bands and tribes (ambushes and lines) and a two-component warfare pattern for chiefdoms and states (battles and sieges). For the study I selected the best-known warring societies (i.e., those I thought had the best literature). We worked with 28 societies. There were an additional 10 societies not used (my list would be longer now).
3. The correlation between dependence on hunting and frequency of war is $r = .45$ ($p < .01$, $N = 31$), while the correlation between hunting large animals and frequency of war is $r = .39$ ($p < .05$, $N = 18$).
4. See n 1.

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5. Chagnon's 2nd edition (1977) is cited because the 3rd, 4th, and 5th editions have omissions (e.g. female infanticide) and other changes that appear to be designed to make the book more politically corrrect.
6. Bigelow, who is not cited by Keeley, used the term *prehistoric peace* (1975: 241).

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ESSAYS ON MONETARY DISEQUILIBRIUM

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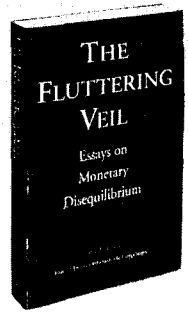
Introduction by George Selgin



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Alex de Waal

GROUP IDENTITY, RATIONALITY, AND THE STATE

ABSTRACT: *The rational choice approach to the understanding of group identity and conflict tends to overlook the extent to which groups are mutable, and the element of design by group leaders (especially those wielding state power) in the definition of group identity and the shaping of rationality. The 1994 genocide of the Rwandese Tutsis was the outcome of an extreme case of planning ethnic and ideological engineering. To see such phenomena as instances of "rational self-interest" stretches that concept beyond its breaking point.*

In *Nuer Dilemmas*, Sharon Hutchinson describes a 1981 case in which a full brother and sister began living together as husband and wife, in blatant violation of the incest prohibition. The two were orphans and destitute, and decided to marry and raise a family. The Nuer regional chiefs intervened.

> Summoning the incestuous couple before an assembly of scandalized elders, headmen and subchiefs, the court president demanded that the brother explain his relations with his sister. However, the young man responded with a firm counter-query of his own: "Who is raising this case against me?" "The government," replied the court. "Who?" the brother retorted: "Is my sister the daughter of the gov-

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> ernment?" The chiefs responded with an uneasy "yes." "Well, if she's the daughter of the government, then who am I?" challenged the young man. When the elders of the court heard this, they realized that these were profound questions indeed and thus softened their stand." (Hutchinson 1996, 237)

The couple explained that they were destitute orphans and had no marriage prospects at all. Being socially "dead" anyway, they had nothing to fear from the incest prohibition, and so they decided to take their chance.

> Overwhelmed by the reasoning of the couple's decision, the court unanimously decided not only to drop its case but to confer its formal blessing on the union. Although the court did not declare the couple's relationship "nonincestuous," it was deeply moved by the couple's plight and thus offered special prayers in the hope that Divinity would likewise bless the union. (Hutchinson 1996, 237–38).

Hutchinson's tale illustrates the extent to which even the most basic social rules can remain open to change. It also shows how group identity can be in flux, with its elements open to redefinition. Part of the redesign of identity has come about through the agency of Nuer leaders; much has been due to prolonged armed conflict, which has helped change and sharpen ethnic boundaries. This is why groups are easier to describe than theorize about.

This is famously the case for historians of the emergence of nations and nationalism. Social psychologists have demonstrated that even the most arbitrary designations imposed upon (for example) a group of students can lead to the creation of ingroups and outgroups and of competition or conflict between them (cf. Tyrrell 1996), from which it is tempting but erroneous to conclude that group affiliation is psychologically prior to other potential ingredients of group conflict that have not been tested for.

Political philosophers and political scientists have particular problems with groups. Primordialist accounts of ethnic and national identity often ascribe some sort of persona to the group. Liberal philosophers and political scientists have even more complicated difficulties. Often, despite their better instincts, they reify groups. They may construct myths of social contracts freely entered into by individuals, but in doing so they take for granted the boundaries of the "society"; and with some interesting exceptions, the actual

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processes of group formation and maintainance rarely resemble the negotiation of a contract.

Herein lies the chief weakness of Russell Hardin's account of the logic of individual action in groups. Hardin's targets in *One for All: The Logic of Group Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995) are primordialism and the related view that group conflicts are driven by mechanisms beyond rational control or analysis. (A further target, philosophical communitarianism, will not be discussed here.) Hardin's main task is to develop an analysis that shows how membership in a group can lead an individual to revise her understanding of her interests, explaining some actions that might otherwise seem incompatible with self-interest. According to Hardin, collective action, whether for good or ill, follows a coherent logic, and group conflict can thus be explained within an individualistic analytical frmework.

Group Identification as Spontaneous

Hardin's first and most objectionable step is to suppose that groups are formed spontaneously, much in the way that someone who, early in the spread of automobiles, begins driving on the right side of the road might be imitated by others as a way to coordinate their interests. "Coordination creates a convention—an institution, a norm, or power—and that convention then promotes further coordination and also exchange" (44–45). Hardin makes much of the fact that "coordination can come about without intent. . . . It can just happen. And if it just happens the same way a few times the result may be a forceful convention that then governs future behavior by giving us special incentives for action" (45).

Hardin's account attempts to explain how lethal civil wars can eventually evolve from such innocent beginnings. His second step is to locate individual rationality within group life. A person's rational decision making reflects past choices and their outcomes; our personal histories define what we can know and do. Our interests are also the product of our histories: our tastes in food, housing, friends, etc., all arise from our background and experiences. These epistemological "comforts of home" help influence our identification with groups and define group identities.

Group identities, in turn, are maintained by norms of exclusion.

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These norms are powerful and, reinforced by self-interest, they can produce and maintain apparently absurd practices. In a compelling synopsis of the literature on duelling in aristocratic Europe, for example, Hardin shows how fear of the shame and loss of honor if they failed to duel left aristocrats with no socially acceptable option but to respond to duelling challenges, and to issue them, when the code dictated. For the most part, such group-specific practices of exclusion are far more potent than universalistic norms. This is all the more true when, as with such institutions as the vendetta and the feud, particularistic norms are coordinated with self-interest.

Hardin is robustly skeptical of the *value* of community. While we imagine communities as benign, their actual manifestations are much less so: "I doubt," he writes, "that any particular community lives up to the ideal of communities" (215). Hardin notes that communities may change after one joins them, and that the logic of their members' coordination leaves them ready prey to excess. What can be gained through social coordination can readily be lost, but this is rarely recognized until too late.

Hardin sees warfare as the outcome of the progressive move from individuals' identification with groups to implicit and finally outright conflict between them. As this progression occurs, the relationship between individual and group changes. People who would not make an early commitment to a group will be ready to do so later, when intergroup confrontation is sharper. In the extreme case—when communal violence is raging—one can stay in the community only by joining in the violence.

Hardin notes the mutability of groups and their changing salience to their members as conflict increases, but this is a minor element in his story, scarcely placed theoretically. This is a problem. Hardin sees the escalation of conflict as a ratcheting-up by group members following their individual logics—like a social psychology experiment writ large—until a critical threshold is crossed at which "mechanisms for maintaining order may break down enough that violence can flare out of control and fuel itself" (155). The limits of this approach become clear when Hardin turns his attention to particular cases of violent conflict. Here, Hardin presents the reader with superficial analysis based on meager sources. His account of Rwanda in particular, despite some insights, does not stand up. The basic problem is Hardin's implicit reification of groups, compounded by his thin analysis of the role of leadership and authority

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within them. "Groups" are not logically prior to "conflicts," and the means for creating and escalating conflicts are richer than Hardin allows.

There is an important literature on this, which Hardin unfortunately neglects. Recently there has been a fruitful partnership between social anthropology and history in the analysis of group formation, maintenance, and transformation. Northeast Africa—a crucible for different species of nationalism and war—illuminates the benefits of this partnership. A corpus of literature on the maintenance of (usually permeable) ethnic group boundaries was pioneered by Frederick Barth (1969). Significant recent contributions include the work of David Turton (1994) on the Mursi of southwest Ethiopia, a group that maintains its identity and integrity partly by fighting against its neighbors. A collaborative volume by historians and anthropologists, *The Southern Marches of Imperial Ethiopia* (Donham and James 1986), marks a watershed in our appreciation of how the expansion of *states* influences ethnic identities. Similar work has been done in Sudan, where the processes of state incorporation are at present extremely violent. To "become Sudanese," an inhabitant of one of the marginalized areas of Sudan must accept a particular interpretation of Islam; adopt a certain code of dress, eating, and housing; and participate in the monetary economy (Doornbos 1988). "Sudanization" was once primarily a peaceful process, but today certain peripheral groups in northern Sudan, such as the Nuba and the inhabitants of the southern Blue Nile province, face the choice between submission to this process on very unfavorable terms or a fight to the death. "Sudanese" identity in this sense is rather carnivorous (to use another dangerous biological metaphor).

Group Identification as Manipulated

Conflict and state intrusion are instrumental in defining groups. Generally speaking, and in line with Hardin's rational-choice analysis, the greater the threat to individuals' physical security, the stronger the definition of the group that encompasses them. But, ironically, we reify groups if we leave it at that. In understanding why intergroup conflicts arise, we cannot escape the necessity of analyzing internal group relations. It is not groups that struggle for

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resources, but individuals (group leaders) who mobilize groups in the course of their struggles. This approach is consistent with Hardin's methodological individualism, but not with a rationalistic understanding of what constitutes individual self-interest. Leaders are able to lead because they can appreciate what motivates ordinary people. This understanding may not necessarily be articulated in a manner that is transparent to a rational-choice theorist; yet it works. Leaders may not be social scientists, but they must be social technicians if they are to succeed.

As Ernest Renan famously pointed out, getting history wrong is an intrinsic part of nationalism. This is why scholars have so often been instrumental in the creation of group identity: they assist in the manufacture of "wrong" history that serves their political masters or their own ambitions. Ethnic cleansing by the Bosnian Serbs was led by a psychiatrist and a professor of Shakespearean literature. Sudanese Islamic extremism is the work of a renowned Islamist scholar with higher degrees earned in London and Paris, while the leader of the Sudan People's Liberation Army has a Ph.D. in development economics from an American university. The executive decisions of one of his main rivals, Commander Riek Machar (Ph.D. in mechanical engineering), have been pivotal in some of the social transformations of the Nuer studied by Hutchinson. For example, Cdr. Machar's insistence that the (biological) genitor be equated with the (social) pater has altered important aspects of Nuer kinship. Other rebel leaders in Sudan include scholars of indigenous cultures and languages.

The role of such leaders in guiding the "rational" choices of their followers should not be underestimated. They help to *define* what is rational, persuading people of the rightness of their decided course of action. Out of the potential infinity of definitions of group identity and constraints on action and thus of individual "rationality," educated leaders select. "A peculiarity of explanations from coordination," Hardin writes,

> is that they often have an important chance element. We might have coordinated on driving on the left, as the English do, or on the right, as North Americans do. There might be no rational ground for the original selection or, rather, for the early pattern of order that turns into a hard coordination. Similarly, we might coordinate on linguistic, religious, or ethnic affinity. (51)

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All of this is, no doubt, *possible*, but when we consult the real record of group identification, we find more deliberate manipulation than spontaneous coordination. Hardin allows that "whether we coordinate might turn in part on whether there is someone urging us to *recognize our identity* and coordinate on it" (ibid., emphasis added). But even this concession requires that we consider group identity as natural or spontaneous—it comes first, followed by those who urge us to "recognize" it: "an Alexander Herzen, Adolf Hitler, Martin Luther King, or Ruhollah Khomeini" need only "mobiliz[e] those of us with similar identifications" (ibid.). A different picture is painted by such historians of nationalism as Eric Hobsbawm (1992) and Eugen Weber (1979, 1996), who show that group identifications are deliberately constructed to begin with, rather than being "coordination games." There is also the distinct possibility, convincingly advanced in the social-psychology literature, that even spontaneous group identifications bespeak a genetic propensity for dividing into groups, rather than a rational attempt to coordinate individuals' self-interested pursuits. Hardin italicizes the following two-part claim: "*It may be rational to do what produces a particular identification and, once one has that identification, it is commonly rational to further the interests determined by that identification*" (60). In many particular cases I would quarrel with both claims, but the second seems to be more accurate, more often, than the first.

Still, as long as we are careful to reify neither groups nor rationality, we can refine Hardin's theoretical account while leaving his central philosophical tenets intact. Rwanda provides a case study in "rational" group identity, with an emphasis on the quotation marks.

"Rational" Rwandan Identity

The creation of racism in Rwanda is by now a familiar story, but its outline bears retelling, as it illuminates two necessary refinements of Hardin's account: the way in which intergroup relations shape groups, and the role of a relatively small number of pseudo-scholarly leaders in determining the content of group identity.

Precolonial Rwanda had a characteristically African pattern of multivalent identities, with a politically dominant identity that tended to absorb the more powerful and wealthy members of other groups. The Nyiginya Tutsi lineage had dominated since the six-

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teenth century, forming a state by conquest and incorporation. It spread over myriad small statelets and lineages, some agricultural ("Hutu" or perhaps more accurately "proto-Hutu") and some pastoral ("Tutsi"). The "Hutu" chiefs thus absorbed became "Tutsi," as did the more wealthy (i.e., cattle-owning) of their followers. The category "Twa," including hunter-gatherers and potters, remained outside this dynamic. But since Rwandese clans include both "Hutu" and "Tutsi," the members of the many "Hutu" clans probably defined themselves primarily as belonging to a certain clan rather than as "Hutu." They shared a religion, territory, language, and political system with the "Tutsi." They were "Hutu" only in their social and political inferiority to the "Tutsi."

European colonial rule, refracted through racial theories and Roman Catholic evangelization, transformed this relatively fluid situation into immutable racial categories. In the late nineteenth century the now-discredited "Hamitic hypothesis" dictated that the state structures of Rwanda be attributed to a race of "African Aryans," for whom Ethiopian origins were invented. The ruling Tutsi clans fitted this ascription well, particularly since their physical features tended to look more "European." The Hutu were thought of as simple Bantu farmers, unable to cope with any higher civilization, while the Twa were relegated to the lowest position of all, remnants of an earlier stage of human evolution.

The king of Rwanda and his courtiers were delighted with the privileged biological label they received, and early Tutsi converts and scholars participated enthusiastically in developing the Hamitic myth. Along with Roman Catholic missionaries and Belgian administrators, they were ardent engineers of ethnicity. The Tutsi dominated the church, the administration, and the economy, and the categorization was sealed in perpetuity by issuing identity cards to all the population, with ethnic identity handed down through the male line. The subsequent experience of economic exploitation, political exclusion, and educational neglect was instrumental in the creation of a common sense of Hutu identity.

When a Hutu-majority government was installed at independence in 1962, the racial hierarchy was not abolished—only the positions of the Hutu and Tutsi were exchanged. The identity cards were retained. Hutu instead of Tutsi now dominated education, the administration, the army, and the economy. The Hamitic hypothesis was not challenged but its logic was reversed: the Tutsi became in-

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terlopers who should be expelled from the country and sent "back" to Ethiopia, while the Hutu "sons of the soil" were elevated as the rightful inhabitants of Rwanda. This revolution was implemented partly by administrative decree and partly by jacquerie.

By the 1970s, the Tutsi had become politically marginalized. There ensued a power struggle between different Hutu factions. Presidents Kayibanda (1962–73) and Habyarimana (1973–94) both used anti-Tutsi pogroms to try to maintain their legitimacy and ward off threats from opposing factions. But the fostering of Hutu extremism began in earnest only in 1990, when Habyarimana faced the simultaneous threats of a multiparty system (in which opposition Hutu parties would probably gain a majority), economic crisis, and an invasion by the Rwandese Patriotic Front—an army composed largely of Tutsi exiles.

Over the subsequent three and a half years, a coterie of extremists around the president and his wife developed the tools of genocide. This process was quite deliberate: a planned use of the levers of state power to foster ethnic hatred and mass murder. It was a piece of social and ethnic engineering, cynically engaged in, that reached its logical conclusion in the 1994 slaughter. Hardin recognizes that "the division of the Tutsis and the Hutus into *hostile* ethnic groups is not an inescapable primordial fact but a social construction" (169), and even that the transformation of "Hutu" and "Tutsi" into ethnic identities in the first place was a social construction. This seems to put paid to the notion of ethnic identity as a coordination game, at least in this case. Perhaps in compensation, Hardin suggests that, once these social constructions had been built, the violence of the conflict between them was motivated solely by self-interest. "In part, the confrontations have been about class or economic issues," he writes; and in part, "they slaughtered thousands to preempt future conflict" (170). This is too rationalistic. Hardin underplays the resurrection of elements of the mythic history of Rwanda. Before the recent killing begin, the ideologue Dr. Leon Mugesera implored Hutus to "return" the Tutsi to Ethiopia via the "short cut" of the Nyabarongo river. (In 1994, about 40,000 corpses made the journey as far as Lake Victoria—Mugesera had gotten his geography as well as his history wrong.) The historian Dr. Ferdinand Nahimana, formerly of the national university, helped set up a radio station to spread such propaganda. Would this

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have been necessary merely to get Hutus to act in their perceived self-interest?

The genocide launched on 6 April 1994 had as its aim not just the eradication of the Tutsi but the transformation of the Rwandese Hutu. The shared experience of killing and enjoying the spoils of genocide (raping, looting, and "eating the cows of the Tutsis") was supposed to forge a new Hutu identity. Hence much energy was put not just into killing the Tutsi, but ensuring that it was a collective crime. Those most susceptible to the propaganda and historical mythology, such as schoolteachers, catechists, medical assistants, aid workers, military and police officers, and local government officials, formed the vanguard of the genocide. Many highly educated people also joined the slaughter. They succeeded in redefining morality for the hundred days of the genocide: killing Tutsi was required by the legitimate authorities; it was normal and common; ergo, it was right. Few people had consciences strong enough to resist. Once the genocide was underway, it is not difficult to explain the conformism that led so many people to collaborate, or at least acquiesce. Few readers can say with total honesty that they would resist (and, in consequence, risk their lives) in such a situation.

The 1994 genocide of the Rwandese Tutsi was ethics by diktat. The "logic" that led relatively powerless individuals to participate or acquiesce is clear. What is perhaps more difficult to accept is the element of design, and in particular the role of educated people, including social scientists, journalists, and the like, in fomenting this atrocity. The extremists proved themselves better social and ethnic technicians than their more democratic opponents. (Fortunately, they were not such good soldiers.) Did self-interest motivate them? Even less so than in the case of the peasants and common soldiers who went along. What made genocide "rational" for the intellectual vanguard was, rather, its consistency with deliberately nurtured ethical norms. The language of Hutu extremism thus helped to shape "rationality" in Rwanda. Similarly, in Sudan—recently labelled a "war of visions" (Deng 1995)—the language of Islamic absolutism is competing with reinvigorated concepts of ethnic identity and syncretistic militant Christianity, among others. Some are masters of these rationalities, and some victims. The designs imposed by political leaders go beyond instigating conflict and manipulating ethnic solidarity in pursuit of personal gain. There are also the molding of rationality and expectations, and perhaps most im-

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portantly, the use of the state itself to create "groups" and "conflicts" between them that set in motion the individual calculi of self-interest on which Hardin focuses.

Group identity cannot be separated from conflict and state intrusion. In Rwanda, Hutu identity emerged out of a common experience of repression, and was bloodily transformed by the genocidal design of ideologues. To some extent, no doubt, the macro-level processes that set the boundaries within which individuals—sometimes—pursue their rational self-interest can, themselves, be explained in terms of rational self-interest. But this extent is variable and needs to be investigated empirically. Personal passions, genuine ideological belief, and the peculiarities of educational background may come into play in determining the goals leaders pursue—and the likelihood that they will obtain followers, bringing "groups" into being.

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Dennis H. Wrong

CULTURAL RELATIVISM AS IDEOLOGY

ABSTRACT: *The concept of culture was originally an expression of German nationalism, which reacted to the French Enlightenment by asserting the uniqueness and incomparability of all cultures as historical creations. This understanding of cultural diversity, which prevailed in American anthropology, is widely understood to imply the moral equality of all cultures. Yet its relativism originally applied to different* individuals *socialized in the values of their culture, rather than to different cultures. The debate over multiculturalism, which presupposes cultural relativism, ignores this distinction. The vogue of multiculturalism reflects the decline of the Left, quests for community and identity, and an actual reduction in diversity more than a genuine appreciation of different cultures.*

The tangled history of the concept of "culture" is obviously central to the current doctrine of "multiculturalism." In the eyes of both its advocates and its critics, multiculturalism is generally understood to presuppose the view long known as "cultural relativism." It might even be regarded as the conversion of cultural relativism from sociological and anthropological theory into a political ideology containing directives for action, even if the political action is confined, as Todd Gitlin has observed, to "marching on the English department" rather than aspiring to take over the state (1995,

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126–65). More accurately, multiculturalism as an ideology combines the anthropological doctrine of cultural relativism with Horace Kallen's "cultural pluralism" as a model for America. I shall be primarily concerned here with the first of these two ingredients.

If one lives long enough, one witnesses seemingly strange transformations and even reversals in the understanding of ideas as well as in their acceptance and ideological uses. Having learned much of my sociology from anthropologists at a time—the 1940s—when there were much closer ties and many more overlapping concepts between sociology and anthropology than there have been since, I was virtually brought up on cultural relativism. Although the general intellectual public—such a public existed to a greater extent then than now—had acquired some familiarity with it, especially through the writings of Margaret Mead and Ruth Benedict, debates over cultural relativism and its wider moral and ideological significance were largely confined to social scientists, a few conservative philosophers, and religious thinkers who interested themselves in the subject. The same debates are played out today on a larger and more politically and culturally embattled stage. But this is only the latest chapter in a much longer intellectual and ideological history.

From Value Relativism to Scientific Objectivity, and Back

The term "culture," in something approximating the modern sense, was originally an expression of German nationalism and was deployed against the universalism of the French Enlightenment. Sir Isaiah Berlin has related this history, and it has been told again with special reference to cultural relativism and multiculturalism by Alain Finkielkraut (Berlin 1992, 20–48, 70–90; Finkielkraut 1995). The gist of the German critique of the Enlightenment was that there is no single story of human progress, no "grand meta-narrative," as it is fashionably put these days, but that different peoples developed their own unique ways of life that could only arbitrarily be measured against a common standard. Therefore, despite the economic and political "backwardness" of German society, German culture was not necessarily inferior to that of France.

Culture was identified with *Volksgeist*, or the spirit of the people, meaning their total way of life, especially its underlying ethos or mentality. This is close to the academic anthropologist's conception

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of culture as embracing everything shared by a people, as distinct from Matthew Arnold's identification of culture with the "life of the mind" and the most complex mental creations. This view of plural cultures, essentially different from one another and incapable of being graded according to some common measure of progress, predated Darwin and the Darwinian revolution in social thought. It was, however, a short step from acceptance of the irreducible variety of cultures to, in Finkielkraut's words, "the theory of races that . . . *naturalized this rejection of human nature* and more generally everything else that might transcend the diversity of cultures" (1995, 79). The fateful move from *Volksgeist* as a product of history to the equation of *Volk* with the zoological category of race both followed from and became the basis of Nazi ideology. At the rarefied level of philosophy and scholarship, meanwhile, the conception of cultures as unique historical creations had become the governing idea of German historicism. Dilthey and Rickert were the major philosophers articulating this view, which influenced Max Weber.

That there was a direct temporal filiation between the German concept of culture and Nazi racial ideology is testimony to the strange career of ideas in history, particularly strange to those of us who were raised on the notion that the "good" and "scientific" concept of culture was the absolute contrary of the evil myth of racism. But the fact is that Franz Boas brought the German tradition to the United States and helped make "culture" the definitive subject-matter of American cultural anthropology. His influence came at a time when the social sciences were in general revolt against the biologism of the post-Darwinian outlook that had been dominant for half a century. Boas made "culture" the counter-concept to "race" as the explanation of human variety. He himself did much in his own research and writing to refute the belief that race had anything to do with a people's cultural achievements.

The reaction against Nazi racist doctrines and practice in the 1930s and 1940s intensified the discrediting of racial explanations of human conduct. The conviction that nature rather than nurture shaped human life came to be seen as conservative or reactionary, although "progressive" thinkers such as E. A. Ross earlier in the century had partially shared this opinion. The opposing view, that customs and institutions were man-made products of history, suggested that they could be reformed and even abolished if they ran

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counter to moral and political ideals, whereas it would presumably be much harder to change human heredity. To say that some practice was "cultural" or "culturally patterned" came to mean the same thing, and to carry the same liberal or reformist resonance, as to say today that something is "socially constructed."

"Cultural relativism" (or "cultural relativity," as she called it) was first used by Boas's student Ruth Benedict in her 1934 book *Patterns of Culture*, probably anthropology's all-time best-seller when reissued in 1946 as one of the first titles in the quality paperback publishing revolution of those years. It was understood by her and others to mean that human actions were invariably "relative to," meaning shaped or determined by, the culture in which the actors had been raised—"socialized"—since infancy. Benedict assumed and implied that the range of cultural variation was wide even among "primitive" peoples, as exemplified by the three different cultures she described in detail in her book. Her aims were primarily to demonstrate as dramatically as possible the existence of cultural variation, and especially to show that it encompassed not only directly observable customs and institutions, but also inner psychological dispositions expressed in a wide range of collective practices.

The debate over cultural relativism, however, focused from the beginning on the alleged implication that the diverse and often contradictory values and moral standards exhibited by different cultures could not rationally, and therefore *should* not, be morally evaluated. Since any and all moral standards were relative to the culture that prescribed them, any judgment of another culture's morality constituted "ethnocentrism": the "view of things in which one's own group is the center of everything, and all others are scaled and rated with reference to it. . . . Each group nourishes its own pride and vanity, boasts itself superior, exalts its own divinities, and looks with contempt on outsiders." I am quoting William Graham Sumner ([1906] 1940, 27–28), who coined the term *ethnocentrism*. It is perhaps worth recalling that he was a thoroughgoing Social Darwinist who wrote essays with such titles as "The Absurd Attempt to Make the World Over." If cultural relativism had overtones of liberal reformism when contrasted with hereditarian interpretations of human behavior, it also had deeply conservative implications in affirming the all-embracing hold that the constraints and dictates of existing cultures inevitably had over the individual human beings socialized into them.

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Benedict's book was published the year after Hitler came to power, although most of it had been written before that fateful event. This accident of timing almost guaranteed that there would be intense argument over the presumptive normative implications of her relativism.The argument was renewed when the paperback edition was published in 1946, at the beginning of the Cold War. I recall being reproached by a fellow student for failing to regard the Soviet Union with the tolerance I was willing to extend to the Trobriand Islanders and the Zuni. I asked if he would recommend the same attitude toward Nazi Germany. That was an entirely different matter, he replied, and he remained unconvinced when I pointed out that Stalin had directed the mass murder of his own citizens on an even larger scale than Hitler.

The era of Hitler and Stalin indeed cast a shadow over cultural relativism for several decades. In recent years, however, an even more far-reaching relativism that is epistemological or cognitive as well as moral has become fashionable and has spread well beyond the ranks of cultural anthropologists. Conservative thinkers have expressed alarm over the nihilism they see it as endorsing, and it has become a major theme in the continuing "culture wars." James Q. Wilson expressed shock that among his students "there was no general agreement that those guilty of the Holocaust were guilty of a moral horror" (1993, 8). Similarly, in *The Closing of the American Mind*—a "closing" he blamed primarily on cultural relativism—the late Allan Bloom complained that his students refused to condemn the Hindu practice of suttee, the burning of widows on their husbands' funeral pyres, that was suppressed by the British (Bloom 1987, 26).

The original cultural relativism of Boas and his students did not entail the eschewal of any and all moral judgment. Indeed, it was itself judgmental in being directed against racism and ethnocentrism. The religious missionary was the anthropologists' major target, virtually their "hereditary enemy" for condemning individual cannibals, headhunters, practitioners of human sacrifice and suttee as sinful or morally guilty. In the anthropologists' view, people engaged in such practices could not help doing what they did, for they could not possibly "know any better" in the context of their culturally enclaved lives. The actions of *individuals* were thus seen as "relative" to their cultures in the sense of being shaped and determined by their previous enculturation, but this in no way precluded a

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comparative evaluation of different *cultures* and the conclusion that some were more desirable than others. An attitude equivalent to the injunction "love the sinner, hate the sin" is altogether compatible with this social-scientific version of cultural relativism.

Conversely, the Nazis and the Stalinists could and did know better, having initially been socialized in a morality that regarded the killing of innocent people as sinful, immoral, and criminal. That was Hannah Arendt's point in fearfully anticipating that if totalitarianism survived to produce new generations without exposure to the norms and values of the past, the "authentic mass man" of the future "will have more in common with the meticulous, calculated correctness of Himmler than with the hysterical fanaticism of Hitler, will more resemble the stubborn dullness of Molotov than the sensual vindictive cruelty of Stalin" (1951, 319). This is a true insight regardless of whether Arendt was right or wrong in thinking that Adolf Eichmann was such a manifestation of the "banality of evil."

As Clifford Geertz has observed, Ruth Benedict came to anthropology from a literary background and made Swiftian use of accounts of primitive cultures to hold up a critical mirror to our own culture. Geertz refers to her book's "famous—or infamous—last paragraph," in which Benedict introduced the notion of "cultural relativity"; he then alludes to "that disastrous final sentence about 'equally valid patterns of life'" (Geertz 1988, 115–16). Geertz is surely right about the primacy of Benedict's satirical rather than detached scientific intent, but it seems to me that her phrase can be understood as meaning that equally genuine representations of the varieties of human nature have been produced by the contingencies of history. This would not entail that that any and all patterns of culture are equally morally acceptable, with the implication that it is both ethnocentric and "unscientific" to evaluate them.

The *fact* of cultural diversity is, of course, undeniable; there are, however, real debates over both the moral import of cultural diversity, and over whether, or to what degree, a common human nature underlies or cuts across it. Benedict's closing chapter on psychology, essentially psychopathology, dealt with the issue of human nature. She seemed to deny that there could be any criteria of psychological normality and abnormality independent of what different cultures considered to be normal and abnormal. This was, inevitably,

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strongly disputed in psychiatric and psychoanalytic circles, which claimed scientific status for their theories.[1]

At the time Benedict wrote, over sixty years ago, a much sharper line was drawn between factual or existential statements, the province of science, and culturally variable moral or normative judgments. Contemporary multiculturalists are usually epistemological as well as cultural or moral relativists, affirming "equal validity" in both a cognitive and a moral sense. Philosophers such as John Searle have challenged their cognitive relativism on logical and epistemological grounds (1995). The debate has gone beyond the bounds of restricted academic controversy and the issues supposedly raised by moral relativism chiefly account for this.

The Politics of Multiculturalism

Why has multiculturalism as an ideology surfaced now, six decades after Benedict wrote? (The negative reaction to multiculturalism on the part of conservative polemicists, which, as Todd Gitlin has pointed out [1995,166–69], has become a political force in its own right, hardly requires explanation.)[2]

1. Multiculturalism as an ideology is closely tied to what has been called identity politics. It is a reaction to the death of socialism, to the fall of the American Left—to repeat half of the title of a book by John Patrick Diggins (1992). It is a response to the erosion of a Left subculture that, as Diggins shows, has dominated intellectual and academic life since early in the century, although, of course, the decline is by no means confined to America. Multiculturalism and identity politics are fallback positions, last-ditch stands in the face of the diminished credibility of what had been major articles of left-wing belief.

Sociological studies of the South during the Jim Crow era documented that it was the "poor whites" or "rednecks" who were the most responsive to blatantly racist appeals, because, lowly as their social and economic status might be, they could at least pride themselves on being superior to African Americans. Jean-Paul Sartre advanced essentially the same interpretation of anti-Semitism: for the anti-Semite, he insisted, "the existence of the Jew is absolutely necessary: without it, to whom, then, would he be superior?" (1946, 34). Opposition to racial and ethnic prejudice is, of

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course, central to multiculturalism, but in basing itself on relatively permanent groups it mirrors the very prejudice it opposes. Hence the frequent insistence by multiculturalists that racism is as deep-seated and virulent in America as it has ever been and that ethnocentric intolerance of cultural differences is as strong as it was when immigrants had to take courses in Americanization. Such a view permits the retention of an adversarial outlook toward existing society that is the hallmark of what it means to be on the Left. Nor is it an accident that the groups most emphasized by identity politics are those in which membership is ascribed and even biologically determined: race, gender, and sexual orientation (which is assumed to be hereditary). One hears less about identities based on religion, education, or national origin, except in reference to peoples from "postcolonial" areas, who lend credence to continued leftist anti-Westernism. Multicultural ideologues actually display little interest in the autonomous "great traditions" (Singer 1972) of non-Western civilizations.

2. Multiculturalism and identity politics have the advantage of being both more and less than a political movement. They are more than political inasmuch as the assertion of an identity rooted in culture has emotional and expressive value independent of its political significance. If it is possible to make the personal the political, as the slogan has it, the personal is also the personal and can be retreated into and serve as a source of identity in its own right. When a particular identity is bound to remain a minority identity in the larger society, it cannot be tied to the aspiration to convert others and win elections, to shape public public policy by capturing or influencing the state. It has a core, therefore, that cannot be touched by the ebb and flow of political tides. This also makes multiculturalism and identity politics less than a real political movement, which must necessarily in a democratic society be coalitional in aspiring to influence the larger society through the state, or at least to propose laws or policies that might be enacted.

3. America remains what used to be called a "mass society" in which people seek identification with groups smaller than the vast, heterogeneous total society as a protection against alienation and anomie. *Which* groups become major foci of identity formation seems to change almost by the decade, but the "quests" for community and identity are constants in American life. Race, gender, sexual orientation, and past subjection to Western imperialism have

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advantages in their relative permanence; the "new social movements" of the 1960s gave these identities their assertive self-consciousness and visibility by articulating in political terms their long-standing grievances.

4. The rise of multiculturalism does not reflect an increase in the cultural diversity of American society at large, but if anything the reverse. Despite the fact that, since the 1960s, immigrants from non-European regions have entered in larger numbers, they are probably less unfamiliar with the major features of the host society than were, say, South Italian or Slavic peasants in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Globalization is a cultural as well as an economic tendency. The cultural differences invoked by multiculturalists are fundamentally identity markers or labels rather than ways of life or sets of values that contrast sharply with those of most native-born Americans. The very stress on supposedly irreducible cultural differences may express an uneasy awareness that they are not very great and that, whether they are linked to race or immigrant status, they are likely to diminish as a result of intermarriage and integration into a thoroughly urbanized and suburbanized society with pervasive mass media of communication (in clear contrast to the society of a century ago). Immigrant groups are not, for the most part, expressing or clinging to traditional values that are profoundly at odds with the majority of Americans or likely to strike them as strange, bizarre, or threatening.

Multiculturalism and identity politics are unlikely to transform American society or even to endure as major ideological themes much longer. Demographic considerations alone, such as reduced immigration and a prospective decline in the fertility of minorities, may suffice to reduce the credibility of the claim that the United States is not only already a multicultural society but is destined to become even more of one.[3] What has been called "civic" as distinct from "ethnic" nationalism[4] has always been especially characteristic of the United States, and that is not likely to change.

NOTES

1. For an especially lucid criticism of Benedict's psychiatric relativism, see Henry J. Wegrocki (1948, 551–61).
2. See the inept and superficial effort by Roger Kimball (1996, 5–8) to "trash"

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Gitlin's book by arguing as if there could be no liberal or Left universalist, Enlightenment-based rejection of ideological multiculturalism and the identity politics derived from it.

3. Gitlin criticizes the loose invocation of questionable demographics (1995, 107–25).
4. The distinction has been most fully developed by Liah Greenfeld (1992).

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David L. Prychitko

MARX, POSTMODERNISM, AND SELF-MANAGEMENT: REPLY TO ABELL

ABSTRACT: *Peter Abell's review of* Marxism and Workers' Self-Management *misses the mark. Contrary to Abell's assertions, my book neither champions a postmodern case for self-management, nor does it try to salvage a socialist case for self-management by focusing on Marx's humanism. Self-managed firms require markets. It may be interesting to ask if that saves Marx, or if that also requires postmodernity, but these were not the concerns or arguments of the book.*

I used the word "post-modern" once in *Marxism and Workers' Self-Management: The Essential Tension* (Prychitko 1991), in the Introduction. What a mistake. I hadn't realized it was open season, and that I'd possibly catch the attention of trigger-happy anti-postmodernists.

Peter Abell ("Self-Management: Is It Postmodernist?" *Critical Review* 9, no. 3) is skeptical of postmodernism, and he seems on the prowl, at least in this review, to expose the follies of postmodern philosophy as related to self-management, his area of expertise. He seizes on that one word, also notes my "flirtation with a number of

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post-something or others" (342) (I used the words "post-Marxist" and "post-industrial" once each), and unfortunately charges after the wrong animal. Having only been grazed, I'd like to respond to Abell so that this doesn't become a real nuisance.

Interpreting Marx: From Modern and Post-Modern to Unity and Tension

The first sentence of Abell's review reads: "the time has come for a post-modern interpretation of Marx, one that helps explain the limits to his rational humanism'" (341). This is supposed to be a quotation from my book, but I myself wrote: "The time has come for a *post*-modern interpretation of Marx, one that helps explain the limits to his radical humanism" (Prychitko 1991, xiii). The emphasis was in the original passage. So was the word "radical" (not "rational").

Abell casts me as some kind of postmodernist and antirationalist, but he makes two mistakes here: he misquotes and misrepresents me. Although I might now be charged with offering a number of mis-something or others, the misquoted statement raises the different issues of how we should interpret Marx, and where self-management fits in.

I claimed that there prevails a common (though by no means undisputed) interpretation of Marx, one that stresses an overall unity in his writings. I called this the "modern" interpretation of Marx (Prychitko 1991, xiii). In the modern view of Marx, there is no bifurcation between the young and the mature Marx, between the Marx of the 1844 Manuscripts and the Marx of the later writings, between Marx the philosopher and Marx the political economist. Throughout Marx's life work, according to the modern view, there unfolds a unified critique of capitalism and an implied vision of socialism. I tried to discuss what I see as a serious problem with this interpretation: the "unity" thesis is defended by two heterogeneous groups of scholars; there are two different and in fact quite opposite sides to the unity thesis, which, taken together, amount to a tension, evident in Marx's own work and in Yugoslav practice.

In chapter 2 I discussed this tension in Marx (Prychitko 1991, 14–32). Contemporary Austrian economists such as Don Lavoie and Peter Boettke (familiar names to *Critical Review* readers) bor-

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row from Paul Craig Roberts's and Matthew Stephenson's earlier arguments, which claim that Marx's work amounts to a remarkably unified and coherent case for hierarchical central planning, such as the command-planning and material balances models of Soviet socialism. The organizational requirements of a non-alienated socialist society dictate central economic planning; Marx, therefore, advocates (or envisions) a final socialist system planned from a single controlling center.[1]

The Yugoslav praxis philosophers, most notably Mihailo Markovic and Gajo Petrovic (and we could add Zagorka Golubovic, Rudi Supek, and a host of others) interpret Marx's unity differently. To them, Marx's critique of capitalist alienation stems from a foundation in praxis philosophy, and that, in turn, leads us to envision socialism as, yes, comprehensively planned, but also radically democratic and self-managed. If so, Marx could not advocate the kind of centralized planning that Roberts and Stephenson lead us to believe he did; command planning would collapse a thousand and one competing capitalists into one *universal* capitalist: the central planning board. Alienation wouldn't dissipate, let alone dissappear, in a Soviet-style model economy. In fact, it could become even more damaging.[2]

To the extent that it claims unity in Marx, the "modern" view nevertheless struggles with two opposing sides. Each side claims that Marx's vision calls for socialism to be comprehensively planned. But (and here I'll state it even more clearly than I did in the book), each side calls for an opposite planning *method*: Roberts and Stephenson see Marxian socialism as necessarily centrally planned, while the Praxis Group sees it as necessarily decentralized and self-managed. These two methods are antithetical: central command planning procedures can't be reconciled with socialist self-management.

Each side offers good arguments for its interpretation of Marx but, as far as I can tell, each seems unaware of the other. I suggested the time was right for a "*post*-modern" interpretation that exposes this tension in Marx: the Praxis philosophers are right in their claim that central economic planning would not eliminate alienation, and yet the economists are right in their claim that the organizational consequences of destroying market exchange could theoretically tend toward (but ultimately never fully achieve, due to knowledge problems) centralized, command-based planning procedures. I at-

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tempted to bring both sides to light, and thereby expose a corresponding tension. I devoted chapter 5 to discussing how this tension sheds light on the contradictions in the contemporary theory of self-managed socialism (particularly Branko Horvat's model) and in Yugoslav practice, especially during Yugoslavia's attempt to implement its 1974 Constitution and the corresponding 1976 Act on Associated Labor.

Although Abell *seems* aware of my purpose (342), he shoots blindly when he writes that he is "uneasy with lines of argument which purport to break with the canons of rational discourse" (ibid.). Perhaps a postmodernist would try to break from the canons of rational discourse; I myself don't know. I haven't read many of them, and I don't purport to be one. (If Abell were sincere in his belief that I espoused irrationalism, his review should have tried to show how I *failed* to be irrationalist—how even Prychitko's [alleged] postmodernism cannot help but engage in rational discourse.)

The difference one word makes. But I must admit that I learned from Abell's pot shots, and in fact I thank him for it: I could have avoided confusing Abell (and perhaps others) if I simply relied on the terms "unity" versus "tension" in Marx, rather than suggesting a "modern" and "post-modern" interpretive taxonomy.[3]

Self-Managed Socialism

In his abstract, Abell writes: "Prychitko claims that by examining the humanist side of Marx, a socialist case can be made for both the LMF [labor-managed firm] and markets in a postmodern world. Such a case rests upon an assumption that self-management confers competitive advantage by enhancing information sharing (increasingly important in postmodern conditions). The case, though interesting, is not yet made" (341). Elsewhere he states that mine is a "salvage operation" (343) for the humanistic Marx.

Abell misunderstands my argument. I tried to take Marx (and the Praxis Group) seriously, not for the sake of salvaging any of them, but rather to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the economists' "unity" thesis *and* to understand the Yugoslavs' call for self-managed socialism, which was rooted in their Marxist critique of Stalinism.[4]

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There was, admittedly, much untangling to do here, and even a careful reader or two might get confused. Turning to Abell's claims:

I don't argue that the humanistic side of Marx offers a socialist case for labor-managed firms and markets, in a postmodern or any other kind of world. I do claim that Marx's humanism (praxis philosophy) suggests that the ideal socialist system would be composed of democratic, labor-managed firms fully integrated through a comprehensive plan that is at once democratic, decentralized, and self-managed. Any and all markets would be *abolished* through the ex ante coordination embodied in a comprehensive plan (Prychitko 1991, 20–22). I thought I made my own stance clear when I summarized:

> From the praxis benchmark, the market system apparently created a gap between human existence and human essence. Praxis allows critics to condemn the market system *in toto*, to demand the abolition, the *aufhebung*, of the spontaneous market process in favor of democratic, fully participatory planning.
>
> In practice, however, revolutionary praxis has led to nothing short of chaos and disorder. We are not praxis beings in Marx's sense of the term. Part of what it means to be a human is to live within social institutions (most notably the market process) that have evolved as the unintended, undesigned outcomes of human action. To abolish the market system would be to destroy the *raison d'être* of advanced civilization. (Prychitko 1991, 118)

So, when Abell wonders how my discussion in the rest of the book (on the socialist calculation debate, the neoclassical debate over the feasibility of workers' self-management, Yugoslav self-managed socialism, and the American experience in successful self-managed firms) could "amount to a validation of Marx's defense of praxis and self-realization" (343), I have one answer: I had no interest in validating Marx. In fact, I strove to draw the Austrian argument into new territory, that of self-managed (rather than centrally planned) socialism, a place where Austrian economists had yet to venture. Of course, along the way I pointed out that Austrians have some of it wrong. (Lord knows I engaged in much debate with my dissertation advisor, himself an Austrian, on these topics.)

"Nobody, as far as I am aware," writes Abell, "is seeking to rehabilitate an unadulterated Langean model" (343–45), so why bother with the socialist calculation debate? Well, first, there is in fact re-

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newed interest in Lange and the calculation debate since the collapse of "real existing socialism," as evidenced by the efforts of Alan Cottrell and W. P. Cockshot (1993) and others.[5] Second, and more important for the purpose of my book, applying the Austrian side of the socialist calculation debate—the "knowledge problem" argument—to the "humanistic" Marx allowed me to invalidate his praxis philosophy and its socialist implications.[6] It also led me to respond to Branko Horvat's theory of self-managed socialism (Horvat 1982), which Horvat himself thought was an answer to the Austrians in the debate.[7]

Self-Management and Markets

If self-managed socialism cannot work, which was the main point of my book, must we also reject self-managed firms in a market system? After all, a good deal of neoclassical economics rejects the labor-managed firm, regardless of its institutional context. Austrian economists are inclined to do so, too. I therefore tried, in my book, to address related issues. For example, I devoted an entire empirical chapter to the experience of cooperage cooperatives in the United States. (Looking back now, the chapter fits badly into a book on Marxism and socialist self-management.) While I fully agree with Abell that case studies such as this "do not enable us to answer the big questions" (345), I was trying simply (and clearly) to illustrate that cooperatives *can* and *have* survived (contrary to the claims of both Branko Horvat and the Austrian school's Murray Rothbard) in a dynamic, rivalrous market system. At least these cooperatives survived, and with no government help. This doesn't answer, of course, the important question of why cooperatives are not yet dominant (343), and I still haven't got a full-blown answer. No doubt a large part of it has to do with the question of risk (364), but also with the related issues of the evolution of cultural and organizational support structures (on this, see Prychitko and Vanek 1996a, xvi–xviii).

Nor is Abell impressed with my speculations about the informational advantages of cooperatives in the postindustrial world (Prychitko 1991, 118–121), lamenting that he "searched [the] book in vain for solid supporting evidence" (347). (Since my brief discussion falls under the subheading "Self-Management and Market Processes: Thoughts About the Future," and constitutes the last four

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pages of the book, I would hope the reader wouldn't waste time searching the rest of the book for solid supporting evidence.) Keith Bradley and Alan Gelb's 1981 study of several Mondragon cooperatives, which I've gathered in Prychitko and Vanek 1996b (200–220), offers some good evidence about the informational and motivational advantages of self-managed firms. And although Abell is skeptical of the productivity of large-scale cooperatives (346), Defourny (1986), in his study of the construction sector in France, offers some empirical evidence that might make Abell more optimistic (see Prychitko and Vanek 1996a, xii–xiv).[8]

Postmodern or Austrian?

I wrote my book as an Austrian economist, not a postmodernist. (If anything, I've always thought of myself as a Romantic, though my wife disagrees.) I tried to show how Austrian economics offers a fundamental challenge to the theory of self-managed socialism, as well as to that *other* historical experiment in "pure" socialism (using Boettke's term), the Yugoslav system of the 1970s. I also suggested that the empirical evidence should not lead Austrians to *reject*—as they do—the potential for self-managed firms in a true market system, especially as we enter the information age; and I suggested that the Austrian "knowledge problem" argument against central planning might be turned against the traditional capitalist firm, Taylorism, and scientific management.[9] Since then I've become even more skeptical about the Austrian arguments against workers' self-management in a market system (Prychitko 1995, 1996). Abell, unfortunately, misunderstanding me as both a postmodernist and a salvager of humanistic Marxism, misses the real goal of my admittedly ambitious and, in places, insufficiently argued book.

To answer his question—"Self-management: is it postmodernist?"—I'd have to say that I haven't really thought about it. But I wouldn't rule it out.

NOTES

1. One may question why I would focus on the Roberts-Stephenson (and Lavoie-Boettke) arguments. First, because I happen to be working within

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the Austrian-School tradition, of which at least Lavoie and Boettke are leading figures; second, because I think the Roberts-Stephenson argument is the best developed within the economics profession, and although it is more than two decades old, they still manage to draw some obligatory citations in the field of comparative economic systems.

2. I have elsewhere noted that, once Austrian economists acknowledge the other side of the unity thesis (that of the Praxis philosophers), their interpretation of the Soviet experiment becomes more problematic: if central planning is indeed inconsistent with Marx's call for de-alienation, then the Soviet failure to establish full-blown command planning doesn't necessarily imply the failure of Marxian socialism, for central planning is not the *only* method of comprehensive planning—there is also self-managed planning. (Thus, the discussion of the Soviet experiment in "pure" communism in Boettke 1988 might be enough to dismiss Marx as interpreted by Roberts and Stephenson, but it is not enough to dismiss the Marx of the Praxis Group.) Moreover, if a theoretical or practical model of comprehensive planning unintentionally *requires* central planning to work successfully, then that theory or practice would fail to achieve Marx's de-alienated system. (Hence, if the Soviets had been successful central planners, Marxism would fail to deliver its citizens out of alienation, as the Praxis Group warned us.) See Prychitko 1994, 520–21.
3. I am pleased to report that Hilary Wainwright (1994, 146–48, 182–84) tries to engage my argument, even if she gives my book two different titles and the wrong year of publication.
4. As a young Austrian economist I initially wondered how in the world Marxists could condemn Stalinism . . . perhaps for its failure successfully to centrally plan? I was somewhat surprised to see Svetozar Pejovich (1991) argue that I shouldn't have taken the Praxis Group seriously, for they were only bent on making an ideological case for the Yugoslav system. I felt that, at least in terms of understanding Marx, their ideological motivations could be safely bracketed or suspended, and that rejecting their arguments, as Pejovich seems to do, would amount to a mere *ad hominem* criticism.
5. For a criticism, see Horwitz 1996.
6. As I stated elsewhere: "If comprehensive planning is humanly impossible, then Marx's claim that we are beings of praxis, whose essence is freely and creatively to design the society we live in, is patently false. If the achievable, as Marx saw it, is epistemologically unachievable, the gap disappears and *Marxian* alienation simply ceases to be" (Prychitko 1994, 521).
7. Abell suggests I'm paying too much attention to outdated theory when he states that Horvat "can, as late as 1982, be caught" offering a decentralized socialist answer to Hayek (344). Abell seems unaware that, as late as 1991, Michael Albert and Robin Hahnel offer a formal model of a fully decentralized, non-market socialist system. I had offered a criticism of their efforts in Prychitko 1988, also mentioned in Prychitko 1991, 60–61n37.
8. More generally, see Vanek 1996.

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9. Austrians at George Mason University's Center for Market Processes have since run with the idea of applying the knowledge problem to traditional firm organization, in their notion of "market-based management." They have totally ignored, however, the feasibility of workers' self-management.

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Peter Abell

RESPONSE TO PRYCHITKO

I must first apologise to Prychitko for misquoting and also apparently misrepresenting him. On the former count I have no excuses; checking back in my earlier drafts I find I initially did quote him correctly but the offending word became transmuted in later versions.

My uneasiness, however, about breaking with "the canons of rational discourse" was not solely tied to my misquote. I interpreted what I thought were Prychitko's postmodern ambitions as inclining us in this direction and "moreover" detected in his opposition to neoclassical economics a strong supporting theme. But this is, of course, part of my misrepresentation.

As Prychitko says, he wrote his book as an Austrian economist, not as a postmodernist. He also claims he has not really thought about the connection between postmodernism and self-management.

My confusion arose from the first part of the passage from his book, which refers to a "*post*-modern interpretation." I now see that Prychitko wishes the phrase to mean not what most of us take it to mean but, rather, a transcendence of the view that there is a unity of purpose in the writings of the early and later Marx—a view he calls "modern." All I can say in my defense is that others whom I have asked to read the book (not just the offending quote)

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have made the same mistake I did. The problem is that much of the content of the book can be fitted, with little effort, into the interpretation I gave it. I did, nevertheless, say in my review that it was not clear to me how "postmodernism" sidles into the act. As Prychitko suggests, the use of the terms "unity" and "tension" would have helped the poor reviewer considerably.

Indeed, I made the rather flippant remark about flirtation with post-something or other because I did find it difficult to divine Prychitko's overall purposes; I feel partly vindicated by his admission that even "a careful reader or two might get confused." I was confused and I have to say, even with some rereading, that I remain considerably so.

I now see Prychitko's aims as threefold:

i) to provide an Austrian challenge to self-managed socialism;
ii) to provide a similar dismissal of centrally planned socialism;
iii) to explore the potential of self-managed firms in a "true market system" in the "information age."

I concentrated in my review on (iii) and mistakenly associated "information age" with postmodernity. I regarded (ii) as already achieved and therefore not terribly interesting, leaving (i). Here again, I think, I got at cross-purposes with Prychitko. I was not aware that he uses the term self-managed socialism to imply self-management at the level of a macro-plan which would apparently eradicate all markets (product, labor and capital). To quote from his Reply: "Marx's humanism (praxis philosophy) suggests that the ideal socialist system would be composed of democratic, labor-managed firms fully integrated through a comprehensive plan that is at once democratic, decentralized, and self-managed." I find it almost impossible to attach clear meaning to this statement and also to the other two quotations in Prychitko's Reply from page 18 of his book. Both could invite myriad interpretations. The Yugoslav self-managed system was not, of course, self-managed in his sense. Rather it was an attempt (sometimes half-hearted) to graft a state (sometimes called social) freehold market in capital assets upon leasehold self-managed enterprises surrounded by product and labor markets. It is difficult to see, therefore, how a discussion of this system is going to reflect directly upon the planned system that is Prychitko's target. Now that I have his intentions clear, however, I find myself in substantial agreement with his conclusions.

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Might I finally say that I still find point (iii) the most compelling; accordingly, my review article was largely directed towards the implications of the Yugoslav experience in locating a role for self-managed firms (not plans) in the "information age." I believe Prychitko makes an important observation when he draws our attention to this issue. I was, though, a little disappointed that he did not take the arguments further. But then I perhaps wanted him to write a different book, something I have no right to expect.

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Branko Horvat

WORKER SELF-MANAGEMENT IN YUGOSLAVIA: REPLY TO ABELL

Reviewing David L. Prychitko's book on workers' management in "Self-Management: Is It Postmodernist?" (*Critical Review* 9, no. 3), Peter Abell mentions my work as "opaque" (342) and also makes some assertions that call for comment. He writes:

> Conceptions of self-management and the labor managed firm (LMF) have not been well received by economists. . . . Has not the Yugoslav experiment collapsed around us; have not the neoclassical economists hammered the LMF into oblivion? . . . Are labor-managed firms economically viable? (341, 343, 345)

Well, the neoclassical economists stand for a debunked theory, a somewhat rare example in the scientific world. None of their main predictions—underinvestment, shrinking employment, insufficient saving, false incentives—can be discovered in our world. Just on the contrary, there has been overinvestment, expanding employment, and a rate of saving higher than elsewhere.

The other assertions, quite common nowadays, require some analysis in order to be properly understood. I shall conduct the analysis within the framework of the contemporary "transition" de-

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bate. Since I have written extensively on all questions raised here, I might be excused for not quoting myself.

Production establishments run by the state—which means by state officials—are inefficient. What is necessary is to make firms independent from the state (from politicking) and managers responsible for business results. This is a meaningful description of the transition from the state-run economy to the market economy.

1. Transition can be effected in two ways: (1) by developing the institutions of capitalism based on private property (to replace statist institutions based on state property), or (2) by initiating socialism based on social ownership. The former generates hierarchy, with bosses and authoritarian work relations. The latter generates economic democracy and the participation of all employed, known as self-management, workers' management, or labor management. The latter is more desirable socially and more efficient economically. Although the latter is superior, the governments in power in the former statist countries invariably chose the former approach. Evidently, capitalism is socially closer to statism than to socialism.

The political cycle initiated by the French revolution came to a logical conclusion two and a half centuries later in the Yugoslav revolution and the advent of workers' management. Nineteenth-century liberal capitalism generated *political democracy*. The twentieth-century welfare state generated *social democracy*. What is now in the making is *economic democracy*. All three components constitute *full democracy*, and in this sense self-management is more than a mere matter of business efficiency.

2. The first to carry out the transition from an administratively run economy to a market economy on a national scale was the Yugoslav Federation. The process was initiated by a law on workers' management in 1950. By 1952 Workers' Councils were established in the entire country and they acquired the power to elect managers. By 1960, some 60 percent of all prices were freely formed on the market. Two decades later, Francis Seton of Oxford found that the formation of prices was equally as efficient as in Western Europe.

In the period 1950–85, for which I have comparable international data, the Yugoslav economy expanded at the highest rate in Europe (4.7 percent annually in GNP and double that rate in manufacturing). Social indicators (life expectancy, education, and health), which I calculated for the 1970s, were the highest in the world

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(seen relative to the level of development). The conventionally calculated rate of technological progress for the period 1953–65 (calculations were not extended to later years) was among the highest, if not the highest in the world (4.7 percent annually, as against 1.5 percent in the country's capitalist period from 1911–1940).

Clearly, the transition from central administration to the market in Yugoslavia produced phenomenal results. In less than a half-century, more was achieved in terms of economic development than in the preceding one thousand years. I described the process in a lengthy monograph in the *American Economic Review* (1971) which was later expanded into a book (1976). Thus, the relevant information must be taken as widely accessible. In the light of these facts one would expect that the experience of the Yugoslav transition to a market economy would be eagerly analyzed by all transition economists. This expectation turns out to be wholly unjustified. In the voluminous world literature on economic transition, I have not seen a single reference to the lessons provided by Yugoslav experience. One must sadly conclude that economic efficiency plays no role in the choices selected and decisions taken by the politicians and their economists.

3. In the Yugoslav successor states, as everywhere else, including the IMF and the World Bank, the main stress is on *privatization*, which is treated as a panacea even though it is *not* synonymous with the market. But even in countries with long experience of the poor performance of capitalism, that was the choice. People want to enrich themselves as quickly as possible, subject to minimal social control and no social concern for weaker partners. Therefore privatization generates everywhere Mafia-like activities and outright criminality.

What about economic results? I will present the data for Croatia, Slovenia and the former Yugoslav Federation. All other "transitional" countries perform equally badly or much worse, taking into account that Slovenia performs best.

In the first five years, worker-managed Yugoslavia increased GNP by 28 percent and manufacturing output by 41 percent. By contrast, in privatized Slovenia and Croatia, unemployment increased from zero to some 15–20 percent. Life expectancy and health standards have been lowered, social inequality drastically increased and living standards have fallen.

4. Why was labor management abandoned and a new path cho-

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Table 1. Indices of manufacturing since the beginning of transformation

		1950	1955
Self-management:	Yugoslavia	100	141
		1990	1995
Privatization:	Slovenia	100	81
	Croatia	100	56

sen, contrary to all standards of economic and social rationality? Because the world is clearly not socially rational and has no interest in Pareto optimality. Rationality would require that the obvious deficiency under Communist rule—lack of full political democracy—be repaired and that the efficient components of the system be developed. Instead, the system itself was destroyed. However, this is not an economic topic but a problem for social psychology.

The Yugoslav case represents an unintended historical experiment. Self-management was intended to develop grass-roots democracy that would gradually spread upwards and permeate the entire society. Yet a single political party was responsible for setting social goals—including the one just mentioned—and for overall political coordination and mediation among eight different nations. As long as the party was imbued with revolutionary ideals, that worked reasonably well. Yet, having a political monopoly, the party gradually degenerated after two decades or so. Deficient political democracy was generating frustration; latent tribal jingoism came to be awakened; and that resulted in an atrocious civil war which destroyed the federation. The more normal political sequence—political democracy preceding economic democracy—was unsuccessfully reversed. It seems that economic democracy—labor management—can flourish only in a thoroughly liberal political environment and by itself cannot create such an environment.

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Peter Abell

REJOINDER TO HORVAT

Branko Horvat knows more about self-management than the rest of us put together. He should, therefore, be well positioned to pass judgment upon its historical record. I wonder, though, whether his doughty defense of the former Yugoslav system is a shade oversanguine.

He argues as follows: Economic democracy—competitive labor and product markets, labor self-management, and social ownership—is economically and socially superior to capitalism. The evidence for this is to be found in the statistics describing the Yugoslav system for a couple of decades after its inception in 1950. The problems the system encountered later are attributable to the degeneration of the monopolistic party and to the concomitant absence of a "liberal political environment." If the latter had evolved, or indeed been developed before the "democratic economic" arrangements were, then the story would have continued to be a good one. All of this has been ignored in the post-1989 transition debate—and why? Because the "world is clearly not socially rational and has no interest in Pareto optimality"!

If Horvat's reasoning and evidence are both correct, then the direction of restructuring in the former Soviet Union amounts to a gigantic historical blunder. How could the "world" be so blind? After all, we could all be better off or, at least, none of us worse off!

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We can all agree that the record of Yugoslav self-management in its early and middle years was rather impressive. Horvat refers to some statistics about life expectancy, of which I was unaware, that can only further support his central contention. Nevertheless it is, I think, also widely recognized that in the earlier phases of industrial development, high rates of growth are achievable with an authoritarian political system by means of a variety of socioeconomic arrangements—including "economic democracy," capitalism, and even central planning. Arguably the Yugoslav system holds the record in this respect, but the crucial question concerns its later experience.

Can we be optimistic that, as Horvat avers, a liberal political regime plus self-management and social ownership will continue to deliver the goods? As I intimated in my review of Prychitko (*Critical Review* 9, no. 3), it is social ownership that seems to be problematic in this intriguing confection.

Roughly speaking, social ownership means an arrangement whereby the freehold in productive capital assets resides with various political authorities, whilst the leasehold is in the hands of competitive, self-managed enterprises. Many of us who still remain sympathetically inclined towards self-management wonder about the optimality of such an arrangement in comparison to more conventional capital markets. Furthermore, we are troubled about the long-term compatibility of politically administered investments (even with the introduction of semiautonomous banks) with liberal politics. Perhaps the failure of liberal political democracy to put down roots and flourish in Yugoslavia was no accident? Perhaps inefficiencies in the allocation of capital are less likely in the early phases of development but come to have profound significance later on, when the complexity and diversity of investment decisions increase in magnitude? These are the sorts of issues I raised towards the end of my review. Whatever the temptations, it takes a great deal of faith to follow Horvat in embracing "full democracy" by combining political, social and economic democracy en route to superior performance.

Furthermore, why focus on social ownership alone, when there are many other forms of capital provision, which may collectively be dubbed capital-labor partnership, that can incorporate elements of self-management? Shouldn't the debate be widened to consider these?

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All of us with an interest in self-management and economic democracy have learned more from Branko Horvat than from anybody else. I feel, however, that while he is in the right neck of the woods, he is presently barking up the wrong tree.

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